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ABSTRACT

This document presents findings of a national study of effective schools programs and other school-based reforms conducted during school year 1991-92. The reforms were broadly defined to encompass school-site improvement efforts designed to develop schoolwide capacity for problem solving, to improve teaching, and to increase student learning. Data were obtained from a survey of a nationally representative sample of local school districts (n=1,555), surveys of administrators in all state education agencies, and intensive case studies of 5 states, 16 districts, and 32 schools. Data from the district survey show that school-based reform was relatively widespread, occurring at all school levels. The case-study data suggest that change efforts varied widely across districts and schools. The study examined the degree to which the reform effort involved meaningful collaboration among school staff, staff ownership of the change process, a focus on teaching and curriculum, building professional capacity among staff, and a focus on student outcomes and equity. The case-study data suggest that the more promising examples of school-based reform often shared a set of characteristics--a clear focus on creating more challenging learning experiences for all students, a school culture in which teachers worked collaboratively and had a voice in decision making, and opportunities for faculty development. The following recommendations are made for supporting promising reform efforts: (1) find a balance between top-down and bottom-up structures; (2) adapt leadership and vision at every level of the system; (3) build local capacity-building systems; (4) devolve some authority to school staff; and (5) clearly tie government mandates and requirements to learning goals. A total of 32 tables and 1 figure are included. Appendices contain notes on methodology and copies of the survey instruments. (LMI)

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IMPROVING SCHOOLS FROM THE BOTTOM UP: FROM EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS TO RESTRUCTURING

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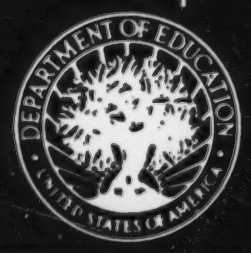

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IMPROVING SCHOOLS FROM THE BOTTOM UP: FROM EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS TO RESTRUCTURING

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary vii

1 Introduction 1

Study Background and Context 1
The Effective Schools Movement 1
The Evolving Conception of School-Based Reform 3
The Evolving Federal Role 4
The National Study of Effective Schools Programs and School-Based Reform 5
Conceptual Framework of School Change 6
Overview of Method and Sample 9
The State Surveys 9
The Local District Survey 10
The Case Studies 10
Organization of the Report 13

2 Patterns and Portraits of School-Based Reform 15

Portraits of Changing Schools 15
Building on the Effective Schools Model: South Mission High School 15
Too Much, Too Quickly: Attempts to Change Edgemont Junior High School 17
Reorganizing a Secondary School: Empire High School 18
Slow Going: The Beginning of Change in Petersburg Elementary 19
Changing a School from the Classroom Out: Cicely Elementary 20
National Incidence of School-Based Reform 22
The Relationship Between Demographics and National Incidence 24
Level of Schooling and Incidence 27
Historical Patterns 27
Making Sense of the Variety of School-Based Reforms 29
Meaningful Collaboration Among School Staff 29
School Staff Ownership of and Attitudes Toward the Process of Change 32
Professional Capacity Building 34
Degree of Focus on Instructional Practice 36
Degree of Focus on Outcomes and Equity 39
Summary 41

3 The Effects of School-Based Reform on Schools, Classrooms, and Students 43

New Opportunities and Pressures for School Staff 43
The Changing Roles of Principals 44
The Changing Roles of Teachers 45
Effects on Teaching and Learning in the Classroom 48
New Conceptions of Students 49
Changing Curriculum and Instruction to Match Higher Expectations 51
Improving Assessment to Measure the Effects of Classroom Reforms 53
New Learning Experiences for Students 55
Changes in Classroom Interactions 55
The Impact of Reforms on Student Equity 58
Summary 59

4 School Site Conditions That Support Reform 61

Providing Leadership That Catalyzes and Sustains Reform 61
Leadership as Catalyst for Change: Energizing the Reform Process 62
Leadership That Nurtures Staff and Facilitates Ownership to Sustain Reform at the School Level 63
Developing Knowledge and Skills in Process and Pedagogy 65
Knowledge About the Process of Change 65
Knowledge of Curriculum and Pedagogy 67
Assessing and Sharing Information About School Performance 67
Setting Up Governance Structures That Empower School Staff 68
Making Adequate Resources Available 70
Developing Parental and Community Support 71
High School Reform: What Gets in the Way? 72
Summary 73

5 District Support for School-Based Reform 75

Patterns of District Support for School-Based Reforms 76
Vision at the Top 76
Behind-the-Scenes Support 78
Conduit for External Reform Ideas 80
Laissez-Faire Support 82
The Uneasy Relationship Between District and School in School-Based Reform 84
District or School as Driving Force 84
Implications for Support 86
How Districts Create the Conditions That Support School-Based Reform 87
Influencing Who Is in the School 87
Setting Goals and Boundaries for the Schools' Reform Efforts 89

Providing Professional Development Opportunities and Other Forms of Technical Assistance 91
Setting and Waiving Requirements 94
Managing Forces and Conditions Outside the School's Control 96
Garnering Resources 100
Implications of School-Based Reform for Change at the District Level 101
Summary: Districts as Consequential Actors in School-Based Reform 103

6 State and Federal Support for School-Based Reform 105

The State as a Context for School-Based Reform 105
Case Study Portraits of State Support for School-Based Reform 106
What States Are Doing to Support School-Based Reform 111
Federal Support for School-Based Reform 120
Federal Mandates as Reasons for Initiating School-Based Reforms 120
Federal Funds and Support for Reform 123
The Evolving Federal Role 124

7 Conclusions 127

Extent and Nature of School-Based Reform 127
Conditions Supporting Promising Reform Efforts 129
Building a Culture of Improvement at the School Level 129
District Leadership and Support 130
State Leadership and Support 130
The Federal Role 131
Renegotiating Traditional Roles to Promote School-Based Reform 131

References 135

Appendix A. Study Method and Sample 139

Appendix B. Survey Instruments 149

TABLES

1	Sampling Frame for the District Survey of School-Based Reform	11
2	District Case Study Sample	12
3	School Case Study Sample	12
4	National Incidence of School-Based Reform	23
5	Incidence of School-Based Reform According to Specific Criteria	23
6	Relationship Between District Size, Poverty Level, and Incidence of Districts with School-Based Reform	25
7	Relationship Between District Size, Poverty Level, and Incidence of Schools with School-Based Reform	25
8	Relationship Between District Size, Poverty Level, and Incidence of School-Based Reform Focused on Schoolwide Planning, Improving Instruction, and Increasing Student Achievement	26
9	Relationship Between District Size, Poverty Level, and Incidence of School-Based Reform Addressing All the Effective Schools Correlates	26
10	Relationship Between Schooling Level and Incidence of School-Based Reform	27
11	First Year of School-Based Reform Efforts	28
12	Areas in Which Districts Grant Increased Authority to Schools	31
13	District Waivers to Schools to Facilitate School-Based Reform	32
14	Relative Responsibility of State, District, and School Staff in Initiating and Coordinating School-Based Reform	33
15	Groups' Involvement in Planning School-Based Reform	33
16	Strategies to Achieve the Goals of School-Based Reforms	35

TABLES (Concluded)

17	Staff Development for Teachers Involved in School-Based Reforms	35
18	Importance of Reasons for Initiating School-Based Reform	37
19	Extent to Which Reform Strategies Focus on Curriculum and Instruction	38
20	Types of Student Outcomes Measured for Evaluation Purposes	39
21	Student Characteristics by Which Outcome Data Were Disaggregated	41
22	Authority Granted to Schools Over Staff Assignment and Hiring, By District Size	88
23	Level of Staff Initiating Staff Development Related to School-Based Reform	92
24	District Waivers for Schools Engaged in Reforms	95
25	Types of Waivers Granted Schools Engaged in Reform	95
26	Communication with the State Education Agency as a Form of District Support for School-Based Reform	100
27	Importance of Reasons for Initiating School-Based Reform	114
28	State Support for School-Based Reform (1990-91)	115
29	Funding for School-Based Reform	117
30	Reasons for Initiating State Support for School-Based Reform	121
31	Major Changes in State Use of Chapter 2 Funds Influenced by the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments	122
32	State Chapter 2 Expenditures By Program Category (1990-91)	124

FIGURE

1 A Conceptual Model of School Change 8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this document, we review findings from a national study of effective schools programs and other school-based reforms conducted in school year 1991-92. We define these reforms broadly to encompass school-site improvement efforts designed to develop schoolwide capacity for problem solving, to improve teaching, and to increase student learning. Data for the study come from a survey of a nationally representative sample of local school districts, surveys of administrators in all state education agencies, and intensive case studies of 5 states, 16 districts, and 32 schools.

Extent and Nature of School-Based Reform

Data from the district survey show that school-based reform is relatively widespread—somewhere from a fifth to two-thirds of districts reported having schools involved in reform efforts. The exact number depends on the definition of *reform* we use. For example, 40 percent of districts reported that their most comprehensive school-based reforms focused on increasing student learning, improving teaching, and developing schoolwide planning and problem-solving capacity. Only 18 percent reported that their reform efforts met all seven of the federally defined effective schools criteria.

Reform efforts occurred at all school levels, with secondary schools only slightly less likely to be involved in school-based reform than elementary and intermediate schools. Fifty-three percent of secondary schools had school-based reform programs, compared with 56 percent of elementary schools and 57 percent of intermediate schools.

The majority of school-based reform programs were relatively new. Nationally, only 15 percent of the districts reported having their current programs in place before 1988-89. More than half of the programs were initiated between 1989 and 1991.

The case study data suggest that these national incidence data provide a limited picture of school-based reform activity because of the wide variation in change efforts across districts and schools. In some schools, reform translates into little more than changes in teachers' routines and meeting times; in others, reform involves fundamental reorganization of the school routines, improved teacher attitudes toward students, more challenging classroom practices, and new learning opportunities for students.

Our study looked at reform efforts along five specific dimensions:

- *The degree to which the reform effort involved meaningful collaboration among school staff.* There is a growing movement among districts to devolve more authority to the school level. More than half the districts engaged in reform activities had given schools more authority in the areas of staff development and selection of curriculum and materials. A small percentage of districts had granted schools waivers from various district and state requirements (11 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

- *The degree to which the reform effort involved staff ownership of the change process.* Two-thirds of the school-based reform efforts were initiated at the state and district levels, but over half (57 percent) were coordinated on a day-to-day basis by school staff. Further, the survey results show that school staff, on average, played an important role in planning school-based reform efforts. Parents and community representatives were least involved in planning these efforts.

- *The degree to which the reform effort involved a focus on teaching and curriculum.* Quality of instruction and student achievement were the two most highly rated reasons for initiating reform efforts. School-based reform efforts in a majority (75 percent) of districts sought to revise teaching or classroom content to meet their reform goals. On the other hand, efforts in fewer than half the districts (42 percent) involved revising both teaching and curriculum. Eighteen percent reported not seeking to change either content or teaching.

- *The degree to which the reform effort involved building professional capacity among staff.* The most common strategy that districts used to support school-based reform was the provision of staff development, taking place in 82 percent of the districts. Instruction- and planning-related issues were the most common topics of these professional development opportunities.

- *The degree to which the reform effort involved a focus on student outcomes and equity.* Sixty-nine percent of districts reported conducting evaluations of their reforms. The majority of districts measured student achievement, most often by the use of some kind of standardized tests (55 percent). Only about one-fourth of districts examined data by gender, ethnicity, and family income.

The case study data suggest that the more promising examples of school-based reform often share a set of characteristics:

- a clear focus on creating more challenging learning experiences for **all** students (with clear implications for student equity);

- a school culture in which teachers work collaboratively and have a voice in decisions that directly affect their ability to improve classroom practice; and

- opportunities for teachers (and administrators) to gain knowledge and build their professional capacity in subject matter areas, classroom pedagogy, and decision-making strategies.

Supporting Promising Reform Efforts

Across the levels of the education system, the study findings suggest that effective support of school-based reform involves a delicate balance between top-down and bottom-up strategies. Educators and policy makers at each level of the system need to instill a vision of improved schooling, help build local capacity to acquire new skills and knowledge, and develop policies that encourage reform while providing sufficient flexibility for principals and teachers to devise strategies that meet local needs.

In terms of leadership, the study findings suggest that the strategic use of the bully pulpit by high-level policy makers to communicate a challenging vision of schooling often creates the energy needed to catalyze and sustain reform. Yet, for reform to succeed, that vision has to be adopted and adapted at every level of the system, including the classroom. Leadership and vision, in the end, must infuse everyone involved in the reform process.

The federal and state governments are well suited to garner the resources and expertise necessary to meet the demands of teachers and administrators for access to new skills and knowledge. Yet, over time, it is imperative that local educators develop their own capacity-building systems for obtaining knowledge and developing skills—knowledge and skills that may be specific to their context and that will inevitably change as reforms progress.

In terms of authority relationships, the study findings suggest that reforms are advanced when principals involve teachers in the decision-making process, districts provide schools with greater autonomy, and state and federal policy makers craft policies that provide local educators with flexibility. These findings do not imply that reforms are stalled if teachers do not have full authority over all decisions in a school or that schools have to have complete autonomy from state and federal regulations. Rather, we argue that a devolution of some authority to school staff is generally consistent with reform goals. When rules and regulations are put in place, we found, they should be clearly tied to student learning goals and should be sufficiently flexible to respect the variability that exists across schools, districts, and/or states.

The federal Chapter 2 requirement (under the 1988 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) for states to spend a portion of their funds on effective schools programs illustrates a policy that is sensitive to such differences. The law specifically waives this

requirement for states already supporting such programs. Our findings also suggest that this requirement in the Chapter 2 legislation be reconsidered in light of the evolution of school-based reform over the past 5 years. Specifically, policy makers should consider broadening the definition of "effective schools programs" to include a wider range of school-based reform strategies.*

* The data for this study were collected, analyzed, and reported in draft form before passage of either Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) or the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 103-382). In Title VI of that reauthorized legislation, Improving America's Schools Act (U.S. Congress, 1994b), the definition of "effective schools programs" includes the objective of "promoting school-level planning, instructional improvement, and staff development" (Sec. 6003, p. 199). Title VI is the modified and renamed Chapter 2 program.

1 INTRODUCTION

In this document, we present our findings and conclusions from a congressionally mandated study of effective schools programs and other school-based reform efforts. We define these reforms to include a wide range of improvement activities located and controlled at the school site that have as their goal the development of a schoolwide capacity for problem solving, the improvement of teaching, and increased academic achievement for all students. We examine such reform efforts with data from a survey of a nationally representative sample of local school districts, surveys of administrators in all state education agencies, and intensive case studies of reform in 5 states, 16 districts, and 32 schools. The goals of the study are to describe various types of school-based reform strategies (including effective schools programs), to assess the effects of those reforms on schools, classrooms, and teachers, and to examine the support from district, state, and federal sources that schools need to help them improve.

In this introductory chapter, we first outline the context of reform in which the study took place. We then review the study goals and describe the conceptual framework guiding our research. Finally, we describe the study methodology and provide an overview of the rest of the report.

Study Background and Context

This study resulted from a federal interest in promoting school-based reform, especially through the effective schools model. Here, we first review the research on the effective schools model, describing what it is, how it developed, and its fit with the school reform movement in the early 1980s. We then outline the key characteristics of the reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s and point out the broadening definition of school-based reform that developed during this later period. Finally, we discuss federal efforts to support effective schools programs and school-based reforms, especially through the federal Chapter 2 program (as reauthorized by the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Education Amendments).*

The Effective Schools Movement

What has come to be known as the "effective schools" movement began in reaction to findings of large-scale quantitative studies that suggested that schools make little difference

* The Chapter 2 program was modified and renamed Title VI: Innovative Education Program Strategies in the Improving America's Schools Act.

relative to student background variables in determining achievement (e.g., Coleman et al., 1966; Mosteller & Moynihan, 1972). Beginning with Weber's (1971) study of four inner-city elementary schools in which students were performing above national norms in reading achievement, researchers began to seek out unusually effective schools and, typically through a case study methodology, to identify factors associated with their effectiveness (for a more detailed review, see David & Shields, 1990).

Subsequent studies of effective schools replicated and expanded Weber's early findings (see especially Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds & Frederiksen, 1978). Although each of these studies produced a slightly different set of characteristics, the findings converged on a commonly accepted set of five factors (or correlates) that characterize effective schools, summarized by Edmonds (1979; 1982) as strong leadership from the principal, a pervasive instructional focus, an orderly and safe climate, high expectations for students, and continuous assessment of student achievement.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, effective schools research expanded dramatically. Researchers replicated the early studies, examined efforts to implement effective schools programs, and interpreted the effective schools approach in the context of lessons from related endeavors. Review of this later research reveals several trends. First, researchers began to pay more attention to schools as dynamic organizations with an overall gestalt rather than a set of discrete characteristics. Works in this vein concluded that a school's total learning and working environment—its culture or ethos—determines its relative effectiveness (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Lightfoot, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979).

Second, researchers expanded the list of correlates of effective schools. Wilson and Corcoran (1988) introduced a rigorous academic program, high-quality staff, and a bias for action. McCormack-Larkin (1985) added coordination of instructional support and parent and community support. Levine and Lezotte (1990) further revised and expanded the list with a greater focus on instruction and professional development. Third, researchers extended their work to examine district-level factors (Purkey & Smith, 1985).

Although this later research uncovered a more complex world and elaborated on the meaning of Edmonds' original set of correlates, Edmonds' basic premise, that there are more and less effective schools with identifiable characteristics, remained intact.

The effective schools research has been a significant force shaping the direction of school improvement. Its optimism about the ability of schools to improve, its focus on the importance of the school as the organizational unit, and the intuitive appeal of the correlates gave it immediate currency among researchers and policy makers (Corcoran, 1988). Its influence was subsequently seen in a variety of local and state school-based reform efforts (e.g., California's School Improvement Program, Connecticut's Effective Schools Program, and San Diego County's school-based improvement efforts).

Out of these efforts grew the effective schools process or model in which schools sought to increase student achievement by following a prescribed set of steps intended to create the correlates of effectiveness. A school forms a team of administrators, teachers, and (usually) parents, which uses a set of structured survey instruments to assess the state of the school relative to some set of five to eight correlates. Committees are formed around each correlate to examine the results of the survey, to develop and implement plans to address uncovered weaknesses, and to reassess progress in a year's time.

The effective schools model was especially welcome in schools and districts responding to the wave of state reform efforts in the early to mid-1980s. Reacting to the spate of national reports on the sorry state of education in this country (e.g., *A Nation at Risk*), many states instituted reforms that called for higher student achievement, more widespread testing and accountability, and a differentiated reward structure for teachers (Firestone, Fuhrman, & Kirst, 1991). The effective schools model, with its clear focus on outcomes, its ready-made instruments, and its fairly well-specified process for planning and change, appealed to the many local educators who felt under pressure to show improvements to the public.

The Evolving Conception of School-Based Reform

Throughout the later 1980s and early 1990s, the education reform movement acquired a decidedly different cast. Central to these more recent reforms is the assumption that American elementary and secondary schools are failing to provide nearly all students with the high-quality education needed to become future citizens and productive workers. The rhetoric of reform has changed from a focus on higher standardized test scores to more challenging standards, from more equalized opportunities for some students to new and better opportunities for all students.

This current wave of reform is based on the emerging principle that teaching and learning have to focus on the development for **all** students of critical-thinking skills based in real-life applications (Knapp & Shields, 1990). Following from this premise are both a call for

fundamental shifts in what takes place within the classroom and an emerging argument that we need to rethink our ideas of schools and school systems completely. In this conception, the notion of the traditional school with a series of isolated classrooms into which students flow for fixed periods of time to study differentiated subjects is totally called into question. Instead, reformers are urging that educators rethink schools from the bottom up and devise new institutions governed by neither previous practice nor burdensome regulations. To provide schools with opportunities to do so, such reformers call for the deregulation of the education system and for the devolution of authority from the federal and state governments to local schools—in return for accountability for student results (Elmore & Associates, 1990).

These arguments are reflected in nearly every recent reform effort in the nation in one form or another. On the federal level, one of the five central tenets of the Clinton Administration's proposals for the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act is "flexibility to stimulate local school-based and district initiative, coupled with responsibility for student performance" (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). At the state level, we see strategies as diverse as Kentucky's sweeping education reform act and South Dakota's targeted reforms sharing this common focus on school-based change with appropriate support and accountability. Locally, there are myriad experiments with school-based management (e.g., Dade County, FL, and Santa Fe, NM) and other strategies for invigorating schools from the inside out. Other well-publicized national efforts—the Comer Schools, Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools, the Coalition of Essential Schools' Re: Learning network—focus on helping schools provide more challenging curriculum and instruction to all students through school-level and school-specific reform strategies.

These current reforms are consistent with the philosophy underlying the effective schools movement: a focus on student outcomes and high expectations for all students. Both are based in the school as the organizational unit of reform and rely on the professional capacity of school staff to improve their schools. At the same time, the current call to restructure schools represents an evolution of thinking that builds on the ideas guiding the original effective schools model. In particular, there is an increased focus on new forms of teaching and learning, new kinds of assessment, the reorganization of time and space, and increased authority for teachers.

The Evolving Federal Role

Throughout the past two decades, the federal government has taken a number of steps to support school-based reform efforts. In both 1978 (P.L. 95-561) and 1981 (P.L. 97-35), Congress built a schoolwide projects provision into the Chapter 1/Title I program that allowed schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged children to use the federal funds on

a schoolwide basis to improve the entire school. This provision represented a balance of congressional concern that the funds be targeted on poor schools and low-achieving students with an acknowledgment of the findings of the effective schools research that schools that best serve children from low-income families do so because they are good schools for all their students.

The Chapter 1 program continued to evolve in the 1988 Amendments (P.L. 100-297), in which the requirements for schoolwide projects were changed to encourage more schools to adopt them. Moreover, the legislation included a requirement that schools with Chapter 1 programs evidence student success in terms of both basic and higher-order skills. Schools failing to do so were required to assess their problems and develop a school plan for addressing these weaknesses and improving student performance—a process very similar to that developed in the effective schools model.

In 1994, Congress again amended Chapter 1 (renamed Title I) to more strongly encourage schoolwide projects and school-level professional development. Under the new Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), Title I also renews the school improvement and accountability provisions for these compensatory education programs.

The federal Chapter 2 program (in effect when this study was conducted) is an even clearer example of federal efforts to support school-based reform. This law, first promulgated as part of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (P.L. 95-35), brought together 40 previously categorical programs into a single grant to the states. The program had the goal of providing flexible dollars for the improvement of schools in ways deemed most appropriate by state and local educators. When research on the program suggested that the funds were not always focused on improvement programs (e.g., Knapp & Blakely, 1986), Congress drafted new language in the 1988 Amendments that provided clearer guidance that funds were to be used for improvement efforts, including effective schools programs. Moreover, the legislation required that state agencies spend 20 percent of their allocations to support effective schools programs. Since the research reported in this document took place, there have been a series of other federal initiatives to support school-based reform efforts, including Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) and IASA (P.L. 103-382), which amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The National Study of Effective Schools Programs and School-Based Reform

The idea for this study developed in tandem with congressional interest in making the 1988 Chapter 2 program more focused on school improvement efforts. Paralleling the legislative focus

on effective schools, the study was originally conceived as an examination of effective schools programs nationally. However, as we began to design the study instruments in the fall of 1990, it had become apparent—as we have discussed above—that the movement of school-level reform was evolving beyond the traditional, correlate-based effective schools model. Consequently, we chose to widen the focus of the study to include traditional effective schools programs as well as more broadly defined school-based reforms, including those that are referred to under the labels of "school-based decision making" and "restructuring." Our definition, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, encompasses school-level improvement activities designed to develop schoolwide capacity for problem solving, to improve teaching, and to increase student achievement. For clarity's sake, we use the term "school-based reform" to refer to these efforts, while retaining "effective schools programs" to refer to that subset of efforts that identify themselves as such and that are tied to the traditional, correlate-based model.

This study is designed to increase our knowledge about the extent and nature of such school-based reform. Specifically, this study has the following goals:

(1) to describe the incidence of school-based reform nationally, to describe what school-based reform looks like, and to assess its effects on classroom practice and student learning;

(2) to describe local district support for school-based reform and to assess the results of those efforts;

(3) to describe state support for school-based reform and to assess the results of those efforts; and

(4) to describe the role of the Chapter 2 program (and other federal programs) in stimulating and supporting school change efforts at the school, district, and state levels.

In the remainder of this chapter, we outline the conceptual framework guiding the study and then review the method we used to address these study goals.

Conceptual Framework of School Change

On the basis of a literature review of the evolution of effective schools programs and school-based reform (David & Shields, 1990), much of which is summarized at the beginning of this chapter, we developed a conceptual framework to guide the study's design and the analysis of the study's findings. The framework combines top-down and bottom-up perspectives on school change efforts to place school-based reform in the context of the entire education system from the

federal level down to the classroom. The framework represents a model of the process of change inside of schools, along with the internal and external forces that influence that process.

The conceptual model is based on the following assumptions:

- The key to successful school reform is changing the process and content of teaching and learning to increase students' critical-thinking skills.
- Improving teaching and learning for all students involves an ongoing schoolwide effort to plan, implement, assess, and revise improvement strategies.
- District, state, and federal policies and practices facilitate or impede school-level change efforts.

Figure 1 represents schematically these assumptions about the process of changing schools. The figure describes the multilevel dynamics of school change: the classroom, the school, the community context, and district, state, and federal policies and practices.

In this framework, the school is the central focus of change. We assume that increasing learning for all students involves schoolwide strategies. Initiating and maintaining meaningful school change involves the development of a schoolwide capacity for problem solving, a school culture conducive to academic learning, and supportive leadership. Meaningful reforms at the school-building level, in turn, can create the necessary conditions for improved teaching and learning.

We place the school and its classrooms within two contexts. The first is the community. Community and parental support plays a key role in shaping school change at both the organizational and instructional levels. Second, we locate schools in the intergovernmental context. School change involves support from above—in terms of leadership, resources, and flexibility. This support can be especially important at the district level. District leadership, management, and resources have important direct and indirect effects on the quality of school leadership (through selection, incentives, and training) and on the ability of schools to develop a capacity for problem solving.

State governments also can play a central role in supporting school-level reform. State leaders can be especially influential by setting a school reform agenda, building political support for the need to change schools, and providing necessary resources. Finally, as we discussed earlier, the federal government also can play a leadership role in promoting higher-quality education for all students.

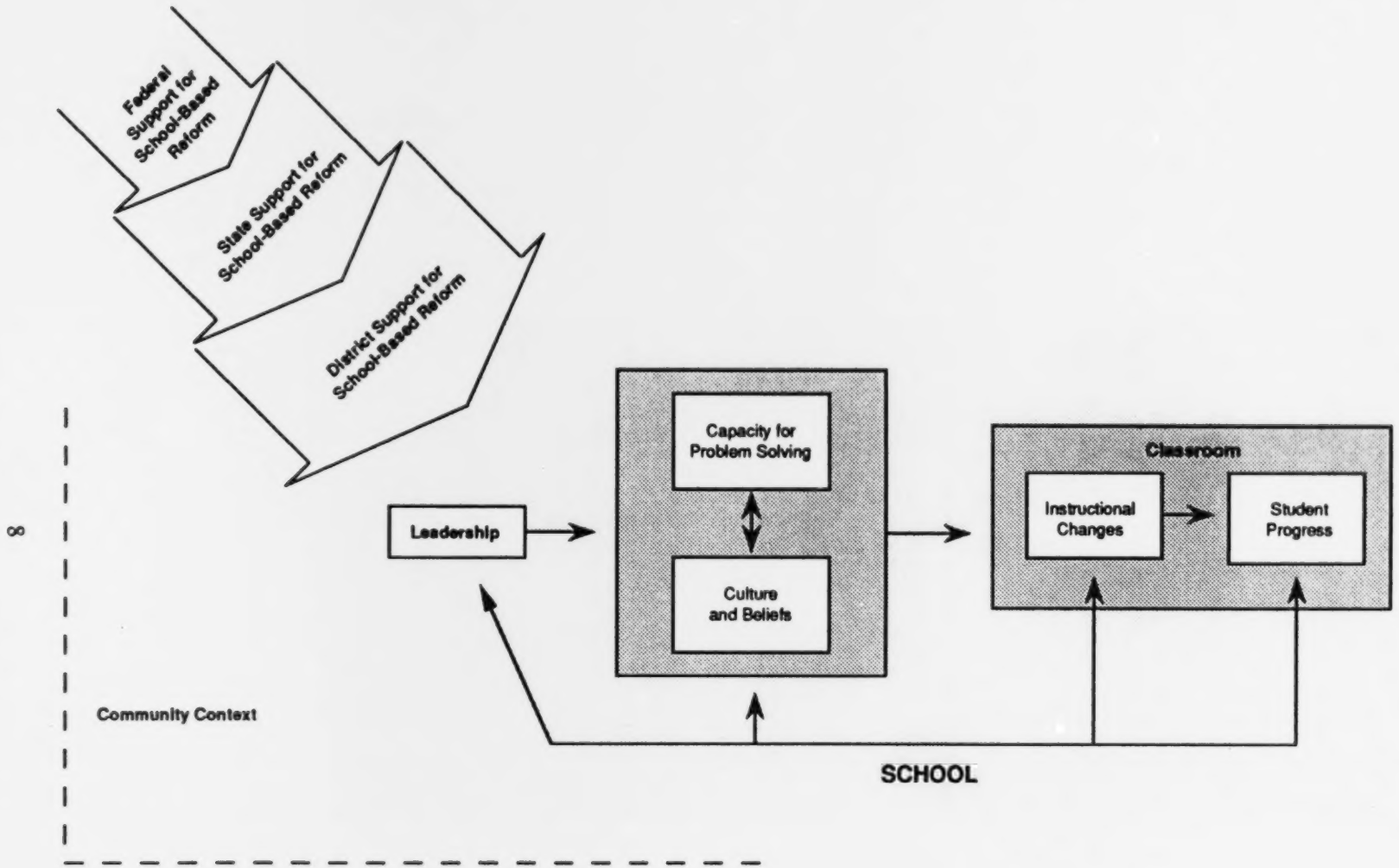

FIGURE 1 A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF SCHOOL CHANGE

This model of school change serves a number of purposes in the study. The study design and data collection procedures reflect categories and relationships we have described here. The study analyses also reflect the arguments and assumptions of this model. In particular, the model suggests a number of hypotheses or assertions about school reform that have guided the analysis of the study data.

Overview of Method and Sample

The study involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from two surveys of state education agency (SEA) personnel, a mail survey of a nationally representative sample of local school districts (LEAs), and intensive case studies in 5 states, 16 school districts, and 32 elementary and secondary schools. The use of these various data collection methods reflected the need to integrate data from a variety of sources at different levels of the education system, as reflected in the conceptual framework outlined above. Consequently, the survey instruments at both the state and local levels and the case study interview protocols were structured to obtain information on many of the same issues. We then used the case studies to explore the reasons for underlying patterns discovered in the analysis of survey data. Within the case studies themselves, we selected three local districts in each of the case study states (and two schools in each of these districts) to better understand and explain the relationship between state agency reform initiatives and implementation of related local programs.

In the remainder of this section, we provide a brief overview of these data collection activities. We provide more detail on our methods and sampling procedures in Appendix A.

The State Surveys

A central study purpose was to gather data on state-level reform efforts from all state agencies (as well as from Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico). Because of the complexity and variety of state reform programs, we devised two separate survey instruments, one to be administered by telephone, the second by mail.

The telephone surveys were conducted, following a structured instrument (see Appendix B), with the individual in each state agency most knowledgeable about the state's reform activities. The survey focused on a description of the key reform activities in the state and the types of state support offered to districts and schools. Fifty-one of the 52 state agencies surveyed completed the instrument.

The state mail survey was sent to each state's Chapter 2 coordinator because of our interest in tracing the effects of the federal requirement that states support effective school programs. The survey focused on state Chapter 2 fund allocation, decision making, and use of Chapter 2 funds to support school-based reform programs. Of the 52 state agencies surveyed, 47 responded.

The Local District Survey

To gather nationwide data on school-based reform activities, we conducted a mail survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,030 school districts (1,555, or 77 percent, of which returned completed surveys). The sample of districts was randomly drawn from the population of districts within cells of a sampling frame defined by two variables: district enrollment and district wealth (using Orshansky percentiles). Table 1 shows the resulting sample and the number of respondents in each of the sampling cells.

The survey instrument itself (Appendix B) is divided into two sections. The first section asked the district administrator a series of questions regarding the district's support for school-based reform efforts. In the second section, the administrator was asked to answer a series of questions on the most comprehensive building-level reform effort that had been operational for at least 1 year in the district as of fall 1991. Thus, from each of the sampled districts, we have both district- and school-level data.

The Case Studies

The case studies involved on-site visits by teams of two professionals to 5 state capitals, 16 school districts, and 32 schools. The time on site ranged from 4 to 6 person-days for state-level visits and 8 to 12 person-days at the local level. Data collection methods included intensive semi-structured interviews with key respondents (see Appendix B for instruments), review of relevant records, and observation of key events (e.g., school-level planning meetings).

We visited five states: California, Connecticut, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Washington. The state sample was chosen to represent the range of state school reform strategies from traditional, correlate-driven effective schools programs (e.g., South Dakota's Effective Schools Program) to change efforts promoting more fundamental reorganization of schooling (e.g., Kentucky's Educational Reform Act). The sample also captures variation in state roles and involvement with these reform strategies.

The local sample included 16 districts and 32 schools. Three districts were located in each state (four in California). The local samples as a whole were selected to represent demographic

variation. Tables 2 and 3 describe the variation across both the district and school samples on key variables. In addition, we sought variation in the length of time the reform effort had been under way, in whether the reform had begun at the school site or was initiated at a higher level, and in the funding source. Please note that we will name no districts or schools in this report. Where appropriate, we have used pseudonyms to protect the identity of local respondents.

Table 1

SAMPLING FRAME FOR THE DISTRICT SURVEY OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

	District Poverty Level[b]			
District Size[a]	Low (< 10%)	Medium (10-19%)	High (≥ 20%)	Total
All districts				
Population N	5,134	5,173	3,531	13,838
Sample n	817	782	431	2,030
Respondents	607	620	328	1,555
Very large (≥ 25,000)				
Population N	47	80	60	187
Sample n	47	80	60	187
Respondents	29	51	40	120
Large (10,000-24,999)				
Population N	198	201	92	491
Sample n	198	201	92	491
Respondents	145	164	65	374
Medium (2,500-9,999)				
Population N	1,314	970	581	2,865
Sample n	329	242	125	696
Respondents	255	195	102	552
Small (1,000-2,499)				
Population N	1,516	1,384	643	3,543
Sample n	150	139	65	354
Respondents	105	108	59	272
Very small (< 1,000)				
Population N	2,059	2,538	2,155	6,752
Sample n	93	120	89	302
Respondents	73	102	62	237

Table reads: Of the 5,134 low-poverty districts nationally, we sampled 817, of which 607 returned completed surveys.

[a]Student enrollment.

[b]Orshansky percentile.

Table 2

DISTRICT CASE STUDY SAMPLE
(N = 16)

Metropolitan status	
Urban	6
Suburban	4
Rural	6
Enrollment	
Under 7,500	5
7,500 to 25,000	8
More than 25,000	3
Poverty level[a]	
0% to 33%	8
34% to 66%	7
67% to 100%	1
Percentage minority	
0% to 33%	9
34% to 66%	6
67% to 100%	1

Table reads: Six of the 16 case study districts were located in urban areas.

[a] Poverty level is measured by the percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunch.

Table 3

SCHOOL CASE STUDY SAMPLE
(N = 32)

School level	
Elementary	21
Middle	6
High	5
Enrollment	
Under 500	16
500 to 1,000	9
More than 1,000	7
Poverty level[a]	
0% to 33%	14
34% to 66%	12
67% to 100%	6
Percentage minority	
0% to 33%	17
34% to 66%	11
67% to 100%	4

Table reads: Twenty-one of the 32 case study schools were elementary schools.

[a] Poverty level is measured by the percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunch.

Organization of the Report

In the following chapter, we discuss the extent and nature of school-based reform across the survey and case study samples. In the third chapter, we trace the effects of the reforms on school personnel, classroom activities, and students. Chapters 4 and 5 address the school and district conditions needed to support meaningful reform activities. In Chapter 6, we turn to state and federal support for school-based improvement.

2 PATTERNS AND PORTRAITS OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

In this chapter, we attempt to describe for the reader what school-based reform is—that is, what it looks like inside of schools. To do so, we present a series of portraits of schools undergoing reform. We use these portraits to underscore the uniqueness and complexity of each school's effort to improve. Acknowledging this complexity, we go on to estimate the extent of reform efforts nationwide, using a series of different criteria. Finally, we use both the portraits and survey data to create a set of key dimensions along which schools undergoing change vary.

Portraits of Changing Schools

What does school-based reform actually look like? The case studies show that reform takes on very different meanings in different schools. Reform in one school involves a thorough reworking of every aspect of school life, while in another school, little may change except the adoption of a schedule of meetings among school staff. In this section, we highlight these differences among improvement efforts by presenting short portraits of reform in five case study schools.

The first portrait describes a high school that has successfully built on the effective schools model to create a series of promising reforms. The second portrait, which also describes a school that began by following the effective schools model, illustrates the difficulties many schools face in trying to do too much too quickly. In the third portrait, we describe an attempt to restructure a high school through school-based decision making. The fourth portrait is of a school struggling with an effort to provide teachers more of a voice in decisions. Finally, we portray an interesting school-based reform effort that began with the adoption of new instructional approaches among a small set of teachers in an elementary school.

These portraits are not meant to represent a set of all-inclusive categories into which any school's change effort can be placed. Rather, they illustrate five unique stories—but all stories share similar characteristics, which we explore in the final section of this chapter.

Building on the Effective Schools Model: South Mission High School

South Mission High School exemplifies a school successfully adopting the effective schools model. Taking advantage of the many instruments and professional development opportunities

based in the effective schools research, school staff implemented a number of key changes in the school and established methods for continually improving their work.

South Mission High School is located in what once was a predominantly rural, white, agricultural area that over the past decade has experienced rapid population growth and the influx of a large number of Latino students (who now make up a third of the district's enrollment). Since 1987, the entire district has been involved in the effective schools process. Here, effective schools are defined by seven correlates: clear and specific purposes, strong educational leadership, high expectations for students, mastery of basic skills, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive climate for learning, and partnership with parents and community. All staff are required to go through effective schools training, and principals are evaluated on the extent to which these correlates are present in their schools.

Following the effective schools model and district requirements, South Mission has established a school council that oversees the work of seven teacher-staffed subcommittees that correspond roughly to the seven correlates of effective schools. Each subcommittee, with the assistance of structured survey instruments, assesses how well the school is doing relative to its particular correlate. On the basis of this information, recommendations for changes in school policy or other actions are forwarded to the school council, which in turn makes recommendations to the principal.

This process of bringing teachers together in a formal way to assess and discuss the school's strengths and weaknesses has led to a number of reforms in the school. The first set of these changes involves safety and school climate. The school has instituted a split lunch period to reduce the number of students out of classrooms at the same time. The campus has been closed to outsiders, and a student leadership team has been established to discuss concerns and address problems among the different groups in the student body.

The second set of reforms relates more directly to teaching and learning. Given its changing student population, the school staff has decided to create a "Welcome Center," essentially a transitional period for new immigrant students where students are exposed to basic English and taught the procedures and rules of American high schools. To serve this same population, the curriculum now includes a series of English as a second language and bilingual classes. Finally, an extra tutoring session has been set up and transportation schedules changed to accommodate students who need to stay at school late for tutoring.

Perhaps most important, according to teachers, has been a change in attitudes about the ability of students to succeed. The effective schools training that teachers have received emphasizes the idea that all students can learn. On the basis of this training and their reading of research on student grouping, the teachers (with a push from the district) have chosen to virtually eliminate tracking from the school. Except for advanced placement courses and the Welcome Center, there are no tracks in the school. If students are not succeeding, it is the responsibility of the teacher to modify his/her instructional practices.

South Mission began the reform process with a prepackaged program of how improvement should proceed. There were seven goals for the school, each established by the effective schools literature; seven subcommittees were set up to address the goals; and structured instruments were

made available to assess progress toward the goals. Change began with school-level organization and only later affected classrooms—primarily through changes in teachers' expectations. These shifts in teacher attitudes, which translated into similar expectations for all students, reflect a basic tenet of the effective schools philosophy: that schools should seek to close the achievement gap between high and low socioeconomic students. Importantly, student test scores at South Mission have continued to rise over the past few years, even as its student population has become less affluent.

Too Much, Too Quickly: Attempts to Change Edgemont Junior High School

Edgemont Junior High School presents an example of a less successful reform effort that began with adoption of the effective schools model. Here, a variety of different district- and principal-initiated reforms overwhelmed the teaching staff, and there was only minimal evidence that the changes were improving the school.

Edgemont JHS serves nearly 1,000 students, grades 7-9, in a small city that serves as the hub of a large agricultural and cattle-ranching area. Over the past 3 years, the school has become involved in a statewide effective schools network, begun to participate in a state-initiated restructuring program, undertaken plans to move to the middle school model, and started to implement a series of district-developed curricula that follow the Outcome Based Education model. Individually, each of these reforms has led to some promising changes; in combination, they seem to have swamped the staff with a blizzard of ideas in which teachers are getting lost.

The involvement with the effective schools process constituted the first reform effort. Beginning in 1989, the school became involved in a state-sponsored program as a result of the principal's desire to formalize a planning structure in the school. As in the case of South Mission High School, involvement in an effective schools program has led to the forming of school committees, the assessment of school needs using structured survey instruments, the identification of needs, and recommendations to the principal. These efforts seem to have made modest changes—for example, each teacher in the school has committed to calling two students' parents per week to improve home-school communications.

The move to the middle school model resulted from a district decision to relieve overcrowding in the school. Next year, the ninth grade will be moved to the high school, and the downsized Edgemont will attempt to build new schools within schools for its remaining grade 7-8 students. This shift will also require the reassignment of a number of the teachers.

The adoption of the Outcome Based Education philosophy is a district-mandated decision. The idea is to change what is taught to match what the district expects students to know, and then to assure that students reach a mastery level in those skill areas. This school year, the district has implemented new curricula in mathematics, spelling, and physical education. Other new curricula will go on line in subsequent years.

The final reform effort—participation in the state's restructuring program—has provided a few funds for staff development, but has not pushed teachers to adopt specific changes.

From our interviews and observations, it was clear that Edgemont teachers were overwhelmed by the volume of change they were experiencing. This feeling was especially acute in connection with the middle school transition, which had a very short timeline (the middle school was expected to be in operation in Fall 1992). The district was exerting pressure for speedy adoption of all these reforms and expected the principal to make it happen. So far, the principal has not been successful in protecting his staff from outside demands or in regulating the pace of the many meetings and reports required as part of the reforms. In fact, only after teacher protests became deafening did the principal start to rethink the scope and schedule for assembling different pieces of the middle school puzzle. With reluctant teachers on one side and an insistent district administration on the other, the fragile authority of the principal started to erode. He said that "it's better to have evolution than revolution," but he is a likely casualty either way.

Reorganizing a Secondary School: Empire High School

Many school-based reform efforts do not begin with or ever incorporate structured effective schools processes. The term "restructuring" is often used to refer to school-level efforts to reorganize key components of the educational process to improve teaching and learning. Empire High School provides an example of just such a restructuring effort. Here, reform began at the schoolwide governance level with a move toward site-based management. Major changes in the organization of the school were under way, but shifts in teaching and learning were only beginning to result from these efforts.

A few years ago, Empire was considered the "bad" high school in this large urban district. The school perennially had the district's lowest achievement scores and highest absenteeism, suspension, and dropout rates. During the 1990-91 school year, a group of the school's teachers came together with an interested district administrator and developed a plan for radically reorganizing the school. With the support of the district and with extra resources provided by outside grants, the teachers and administrators began to implement their plan, which involved key changes in the organization of decision making and instruction in the school and in the relationship between the school and its community.

First, the reform-minded teachers have used the school-based management team (the majority of which are teachers) to change staffing arrangements. The number of administrative positions has been reduced, and the remaining positions have been changed from those of top-down decision makers to facilitating "coordinators." Some of the resources freed up by reducing the number of administrators have been used to provide more planning time for teachers. Moreover, some administrative support staff have been reassigned to help teachers with paperwork.

Second, the organization of instruction has been changed. The four grade levels (9-12) have been abolished and most students and teachers assigned to one of two divisions: preparatory (previously freshmen and sophomores) and transitional (previously juniors and seniors). In addition, an alternative division has been established for a small portion of the students who cannot attend classes during regular hours. Within these divisions, teachers and students are organized into cross-age teams (5 teachers and 125 students) designed for greater flexibility in scheduling, student grouping, and project-based cooperative learning. For example, one team teaches math and language for most of the day in the fall, and science and social studies in the spring.

Third, to help teachers assume these new roles of decision makers, curriculum planners, and team members, the school has formed a partnership with a local university that provides for on-site graduate courses for the teaching staff. Finally, the school has hired a community coordinator who works to bring parents into the school and established a social service center on campus to help students and their families.

When we visited, Empire was in the process of making fundamental changes for teachers and students alike—and for those teachers active in school-based management and the teaming arrangements, life in the school was dramatically different. Overall, teachers had more authority for decisions in the schools, more time for planning and staff development, more support from administrative staff, and greater access to resources and knowledge.

Yet these changes were in their early stages—during the 1991-92 school year, only 20 percent of the students and teachers were in teaming arrangements, and many classrooms and teachers were functioning as they had for years. Empire's reform began with the school structure and staff roles and is only now beginning to affect classroom practice. Consequently, it is too early to assess the effects on student outcomes. But there are data that support the positive feelings voiced by teachers and parents with whom we spoke. Parent and community involvement in the school was at an all-time high; the sale of school jackets and tee shirts increased dramatically as students were no longer embarrassed to be associated with the school name; student absenteeism and suspensions were reduced.

Slow Going: The Beginning of Change in Petersburg Elementary

Attempts to restructure schools do not always lead to such promising organizational changes. The next example underscores the difficulties inherent in getting reform moving. Petersburg Elementary has changed little over the past year and a half since the school staff became involved in series of reform initiatives.

Located in a relatively poor farming community, Petersburg Elementary serves fewer than 200 students with a staff of 8 teachers and a principal. Traditionally, the school has not been one of the most attractive to parents, and communication between the veteran principal of 20 years and the teachers has been strained.

Over the past year, the school has become involved in a state-initiated reform program that provides for school-based decision making, calls for curricular reforms, and imposes new assessment mechanisms. In addition, the school, at the district's request, joined a network of effective schools programs that offers technical assistance and training.

A number of changes have resulted from these reforms. Importantly, communication among teachers and between teachers and the principal has increased dramatically. There are now regular staff meetings, and a school council has been formed—a suggestion box has even been installed in the school. Moreover, as the result of the school needs assessment, a teachers' lounge has been constructed, a new bus lane has been paved, and the school has been cleaned and painted. The school council recently began to debate a new discipline policy.

For the teachers with whom we spoke, these changes have been important. For example, they have been seeking a room for teacher meetings for years; it has only been in the context of the new school council that action was taken. However, when it comes to more fundamental changes, there has been little movement. The teachers have entertained the idea of using funds freed up when a part-time librarian retires to support instructional aides in their classrooms. The idea was immediately vetoed by the principal. State-recommended shifts in classroom instruction, assessment, and multigraded classrooms have not moved forward here, either.

Petersburg Elementary did not become a new school as a result of these reform efforts. Communication has improved, staff were thinking about ways of improving the school, and some cosmetic improvements were made. Yet there have been no organizational changes that really affected the balance of power in the school; and teaching and learning in classrooms does not seem to have changed at all.

Changing a School from the Classroom Out: Cicely Elementary

The final portrait, of a K-6 school in California, provides an interesting contrasting case. Here the reform process began with changes in classroom practice among a small group of teachers. These changes in turn led to shifts in working conditions, staffing arrangements, and governance structures throughout the school.

Cicely Elementary serves about 800 students in California's central agricultural region. The community is predominantly Latino, and a large portion of the families moved to the area to work in the surrounding fields. Over 85 percent of the students are from Latino backgrounds; 60 percent are classified as limited English proficient; and a third of the student population come from families who migrate with the seasonal crops.

Over the past 4 years, the school has been involved in a reform process that began with the training of eight teachers in an alternative approach to science teaching. The new approach stresses hands-on learning with real-life applications, the organization of instruction in thematic units, and cooperative learning. As more teachers have been trained in this approach, and with the strong support of the principal and the superintendent (who brought the program to the district), it has spread throughout the school and been integrated into all subject areas. Now science and technology themes are used as the basis for developing writing, reading, and numeracy skills in the primarily bilingual student population. Moreover, the teachers have abandoned the district's grade-based report cards in favor of narrative assessments based on the use of portfolios and experimental, teacher-developed authentic assessment instruments.

To further advance this form of teaching and learning, the staff has begun to experiment with multigraded classrooms. Four teachers and 100 students are grouped together in a "quad" of four classrooms. Two of the classrooms are used primarily as laboratories (one for natural science, one for technology), and the other two classrooms are used to teach a curriculum that integrates all the subject areas around particular themes. A key component of the multiage grouping is the use of cross-age and peer tutoring.

With the cooperation of the district and the principal, these classroom-level changes have been accompanied by school-level shifts meant to support the reform process. A vice principal's position has been eliminated and the funds used to support two new positions. The first is a .6 full-time equivalent "coordinator of restructuring"—a teacher who now spends a portion of her day overseeing the change process. The second is a community liaison, who has dramatically increased the presence of parents and community members in the school.

Concurrently, and with the assistance of a local corporation, the school has created a Leadership Team made up of administrators, teachers, classified staff, and parents that monitors the restructuring process in the school, serves as a clearinghouse for concerns and ideas, and makes decisions about the future of the change process.

Everyone with whom we spoke at Cicely agreed that this was a much different institution than it had been 4 years ago—and a better one. Most fundamentally, what takes place in the classroom between teachers and students and among students shifted to a more hands-on, real-life-based approach to learning. These classroom changes were accompanied by increased expectations on the part of teachers and a broad vision for the school of creating bilingual, biliterate, numerate students. Through this process, teachers gained a great deal more control over what takes place in the school, and community support has increased. Among this highly mobile student population, truancy and absenteeism were down, as was vandalism. The school was dotted with garden plots that students use for various learning activities—plots that teachers

had never dreamed of using a few years ago and that, according to one teacher, would have been vandalized the day after being put in at the "old" Cicely.

Taken together, these five portraits illustrate the range and complexity of reforms under way in the nation's schools. Improving schools can involve changes in all—or few—aspects of daily life: how staff interact, authority relations, the organization of work and learning, and the content of learning. These cases also demonstrate the limitations of labels for various school-based reform efforts. Some reforms begin with adherence to the "effective schools" model and evolve in new directions; some begin as classroom-level reforms that blossom into schoolwide changes; others begin with bold plans to restructure the school, only to result in superficial changes. These cases suggest, then, that there are no "off-the-shelf" models for schools to follow. The wide variability of reforms also points to the difficulty of quantifying the extent of reform nationally, a task we turn to in the following section.

National Incidence of School-Based Reform

How widespread are school-based reforms nationally? The answer depends largely on how school-based reform is defined. In our survey of a nationally representative sample of school districts, two-thirds of the districts report having school-based reform efforts, defined as school-level programs that focus on building schoolwide capacity for planning and decision making, improving teaching, and increasing learning for all students (Table 4). According to the same district administrators, 55 percent of all schools (pre-kindergarten through grade 12) had school-based reform programs under way in the 1990-91 school year.

These numbers should be read with caution, however. First, these figures are based on district self-report and likely overestimate the extent of reform efforts nationally. Moreover, as our portraits of reform indicate, school-based reform means very different things in different schools—some schools may be involved in a program in name only while others are revamping every aspect of teaching and learning in their buildings. Many probably fall between these two extremes and are attempting to make modest schoolwide improvements. Unfortunately, our survey data do not allow us to pinpoint the proportions of schools involved in reform to various degrees.

We did, however, ask district administrators to choose their most comprehensive school-based reform effort in the district and to specify the program's focus. Using these data, we are able to get a sense of the range of school-based reform efforts. For example, if we use the basic

Table 4

NATIONAL INCIDENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

District Size	Percentage of All Districts	Percentage of All Schools
All	66	55
Very large	85	46
Large	79	62
Medium	72	58
Small	70	62
Very small	60	48

Table reads: 66 percent of all districts have school-based reform programs.

Source: District survey.

criteria that such efforts must simultaneously seek to raise achievement for all students, improve instruction, and promote school-level planning and problem solving, we find that only 40 percent of the districts nationwide report having such programs (Table 5). Using more stringent criteria, that the reform effort must address all the correlates associated with the effective schools research (as defined by the federal Chapter 2 legislation), the percentage drops to 18 percent (Table 5).

Table 5

INCIDENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM ACCORDING TO SPECIFIC CRITERIA

District Size	Percentage of Districts with Reforms Focused on Planning, Improved Instruction, and Increased Learning	Percentage of Districts with Reforms Meeting Effective Schools Criteria[a]
All	40	18
Very large	60	24
Large	63	31
Medium	48	22
Small	43	19
Very small	33	14

Table reads: 40 percent of all districts have reform programs focusing on planning, improved instruction, and increased learning.

[a] The effective schools criteria are: strengthening instructional leadership; promoting school-level planning; improving instruction; increasing achievement of all students (including disadvantaged); increasing acquisition of basic skills; increasing acquisition of higher-order skills; continuous assessment of students; increasing parent involvement.

Source: District survey.

Yet, even when we use more comprehensive definitions of reform, these data indicate that school-based reform is relatively widespread—especially in the larger districts, where between a quarter and a third of the districts' programs nationwide meet the strictest criteria we have used (Table 5). At the same time, the data further support the finding of variability in reform efforts across districts: some programs are clearly more comprehensive than others.

The Relationship Between Demographics and National Incidence

To what extent is the demographic composition of a district or school associated with the extent of school-based reform? As Table 4 (Column 1) shows, the larger a district, the more likely it is to have some reform effort under way—for example, 85 percent of very large districts versus 60 percent of very small districts. Yet larger districts are not more likely than their smaller counterparts to have a higher percentage of their schools involved in reform (Table 4, Column 2). Thus, it may be that larger districts simply have more schools than smaller districts and so have a greater likelihood of having some schools participating in some kind of reform.

When we turn to districts' reporting on their most comprehensive school-based reform efforts, the relationship between district size and the incidence of reform appears again (Table 5). In general, greater percentages of large and very large districts have programs that meet the stricter criteria we have used here.

Our sampling methodology also allows us to compare incidence of reform efforts across districts and schools with varying poverty levels. Here the picture appears somewhat mixed. Table 6 shows that low-poverty districts (that is, districts in which fewer than 10 percent of the students come from families in poverty) are more likely to have some kind of reform effort under way than are districts with higher poverty rates. Table 7 shows that this relationship holds up at the school level as well; that is, a higher proportion of schools in low-poverty districts are involved in reform than in higher-poverty districts.

The same relationship does not hold true when we look at districts' most comprehensive reform efforts. Low-poverty districts are not more likely than higher-poverty districts to have comprehensive reform efforts focusing on improving instruction, increasing achievement, and schoolwide planning (Table 8). Moreover, the relationship is reversed when we look at districts with programs that meet all the effective schools criteria—that is, the higher a district's poverty level, the more likely it is to have such programs (Table 9).

Table 6

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRICT SIZE, POVERTY LEVEL, AND INCIDENCE OF DISTRICTS WITH SCHOOL-BASED REFORM
(Percentage of Districts)

District Size	Poverty Level: All	Low	Moderate	High
All	66	69	68	61
Very large	85	93	78	88
Large	79	85	79	68
Medium	72	79	70	62
Small	70	71	71	64
Very small	60	59	64	58

Table reads: 66 percent of all districts and 69 percent of low-poverty districts have school-based reform programs.

Source: District survey.

Table 7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRICT SIZE, POVERTY LEVEL, AND INCIDENCE OF SCHOOLS WITH SCHOOL-BASED REFORM
(Percentage of Schools)

District Size	Poverty Level: All	Low	Moderate	High
All	55	61	55	49
Very large	46	69	39	42
Large	62	69	62	48
Medium	58	63	57	52
Small	62	60	66	60
Very small	48	47	50	48

Table reads: 55 percent of all schools and 61 percent of schools in low-poverty districts have school-based reform programs.

Source: District survey.

Table 8

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRICT SIZE, POVERTY LEVEL, AND INCIDENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM FOCUSED ON SCHOOLWIDE PLANNING, IMPROVING INSTRUCTION, AND INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
(Percentage of Schools)

	Poverty Level:			
District Size	All	Low	Moderate	High
All	40	38	44	38
Very large	60	66	56	60
Large	63	66	63	57
Medium	48	51	49	42
Small	43	40	46	41
Very small	33	25	38	34

Table reads: 40 percent of all districts' and 38 percent of low-poverty districts' most comprehensive school-based reform programs focus on planning, improving instruction, and increasing achievement.

Source: District survey.

Table 9

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRICT SIZE, POVERTY LEVEL, AND INCIDENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM ADDRESSING ALL THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS CRITERIA[a]
(Percentage of Schools)

	Poverty Level:			
District Size	All	Low	Moderate	High
All	18	15	18	21
Very large	24	34	14	30
Large	31	27	33	36
Medium	22	21	23	21
Small	19	14	21	24
Very small	14	10	14	19

Table reads: 18 percent of all districts' and 15 percent of low-poverty districts' most comprehensive school-based reform programs address all of the effective schools criteria.

[a] The effective schools criteria are: strengthening instructional leadership; promoting school-level planning; improving instruction; increasing achievement of all students (including disadvantaged); increasing acquisition of basic skills; increasing acquisition of higher-order skills; continuous assessment of students; increasing parent involvement.

Source: District survey.

Level of Schooling and Incidence

Conventional wisdom has held that reforming smaller, cohesive elementary schools is much easier than changing large, complex secondary institutions (Firestone & Herriott, 1982). Thus, we expected to find a much higher incidence of reform in elementary schools than in high schools. As Table 10 shows, our expectations were incorrect. Surprisingly, high schools are only slightly less likely to be involved in school-based reform than are elementary schools; and intermediate schools are as likely as elementary schools to be reforming themselves. These figures may reflect a growing interest over the past few years in improving high schools (e.g., Sizer, 1984) and the national middle schools movement (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989).

Table 10

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLING LEVEL AND INCIDENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

Schooling Level	Percentage of Schools Involved in Reform
All schools	55
Pre-kindergarten/ kindergarten	56
Elementary	56
Intermediate	57
High school	53
Alternative	48

Table reads: 55 percent of all schools and 56 percent of pre-kindergarten/kindergarten schools have school-based reform programs.

Source: District survey.

Historical Patterns

Parallel to the increasing national focus on school-based reform through the late 1980s and early 1990s, we found that the majority of school-based reform programs were relatively new. Because many districts have a number of programs in operation at the same time, we asked administrators to answer a series of questions on their most comprehensive school-based reform program. Nationally, only 15 percent of the districts reported having their current programs in place before 1988-89 (although it is possible that they had other programs in earlier years that are no longer operating) (Table 11). More than half the programs were initiated between 1989 and 1991.

Table 11

FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM EFFORTS

	Percentage of Programs That Began:				
District Size	Before 1988-89	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
All	15	8	26	26	4
Very large	28	11	24	21	4
Large	27	13	23	20	3
Medium	19	12	25	24	2
Small	14	12	27	24	5
Very small	12	4	26	30	5

Table reads: 15 percent of all districts' school-based reform programs began before 1988-89.
Rows do not add to 100 because of missing data.
Source: District survey.

In summary, the national survey data show a number of patterns. First, districts report that school-based reform is relatively widespread. Depending on the definition, somewhere between a fifth and two-thirds of districts report having improvement efforts under way. We believe these figures likely overestimate the extent of reform nationally, reflecting response bias. Moreover, the survey data do not allow us to assess the comprehensiveness of the reported reforms. The case studies suggest that many incidents of reform may be little more than reform in name only. Yet even if these figures exaggerate the amount of change in schools, they do suggest a broad national attention to school-based reform.

The relationship between demographic factors and the extent of school-based reforms is mixed. Larger districts—probably because they simply have more schools—are more likely than their smaller counterparts to have some school-based reform efforts. And generally, larger districts are more likely to have comprehensive programs that meet the more stringent criteria of reform that we applied to the survey responses. Yet there is no relationship between district size and the percentage of a district's schools involved in reform. There appear to be less consistent relationships between district wealth and the extent of reform.

Finally, the variation in the percentage of districts or schools involved in reform efforts defined by more or less stringent criteria suggests that the label "school-based reform" refers to a spectrum of varying efforts to improve schools. We explore this issue in the following section.

Making Sense of the Variety of School-Based Reforms

The case study and survey data point to the variability of school-based reform across districts and schools. The five portraits of reform underscore this conclusion by illustrating the uniqueness of each school's efforts to improve itself. These findings suggest that there are no pure "types" of reform—discrete packages into which any school's reform program can be easily sorted. One lesson we learned again and again in this study as we went into different schools is that labels such as "restructuring," "school-based management," and "effective schools programs" typically tell us little about what actually is taking place within a school—and by no means can capture the complexity of change.

Similarly, we found no single dimension (e.g., good to bad, high to low) along which we can array each school's improvement efforts. What did emerge from the data was a set of dimensions along which reforms can be described. In this section, we look at five specific dimensions—the degree to which the reform effort involves: (1) meaningful collaboration among school staff, (2) staff ownership of the change process, (3) a focus on teaching and curriculum, (4) building professional capacity among staff, and (5) a focus on student outcomes and equity. For each of these dimensions, we describe the range of practices we found in our sample and provide specific examples.

Meaningful Collaboration Among School Staff

Perhaps the most common component of school-based reform we witnessed in this study was organized efforts to increase interaction and communication among teachers and between teachers and school administrators. Collegial collaboration is, of course, a central strategy of the effective schools model, based on research that shows that unusually effective schools are marked by productive communication and work among school staff members. The reorganization of working relationships is also key to other improvement strategies directed at restructuring schools to build a positive school culture and to improve teaching and learning.

In some cases, such collaboration is informal and unstructured—as in the example of Cicely Elementary School, described earlier in this chapter. Here, much of the groundwork for reform in the school was laid by a set of eight teachers committed to new ways of teaching and learning. These teachers worked with other staff members informally to spread the word. With the assistance of the principal, more teachers were brought into the group and the new approaches to curriculum and instruction spread widely in the school. To facilitate further collaboration among

staff, the school reorganized classrooms into "quads" in which 4 teachers work jointly with 100 students in a variety of different teaming arrangements.

Similar efforts to reorganize instructional arrangements to increase the joint work of teachers were made at Empire High School with the creation of teacher teams and two divisions for students. Empire also provides an example of another sphere in which reform efforts often work to increase the involvement of teachers and staff: school governance. At this school, a push by the district (and a teacher union) for school-based management combined with the initiative of a core of teachers to create a school council that has virtually taken over much of what takes place in the school.

The creation of school site councils or some form of school-based decision making was quite common in the case study schools. As at Empire, these actions translated into more authority over important decisions for teachers in some instances. In most schools, however, decision-making authority was much more limited. For example, at South Mission, although teachers now have an organized voice in the decision-making process, their input is considered solely as a recommendation to the principal, who has final say over all decisions.

In other case study schools, district- or school-level administrators restricted teacher involvement to issues surrounding curriculum and instruction. At one rural elementary school, teacher involvement in school affairs is limited to the classroom. The principal is the organizational officer and shares none of this power with teachers. There is no district precedent for sharing governance, so these limits do not necessarily contradict teachers' comparative autonomy with respect to instructional reform. However, within the classroom, nothing is off limits. Teachers are taking full advantage and are helping to continually remake the means by which student learning occurs.

Overall, the case studies show that the mere existence of mechanisms to improve communication and collaboration among teachers does not guarantee that such involvement will take place. Petersburg Elementary is one instance where a school council now exists, but its teachers have been frustrated in their attempts to take on any meaningful issues in the school.

This pattern of teacher involvement in school-based decision making was made possible by a growing movement among districts to devolve more authority to the school level, as reflected in the national survey data. As Table 12 shows, more than half the districts engaged in reform activities have given schools more authority in the areas of staff development and selection of curriculum and materials, and a relatively high percentage of districts have given schools more

discretion over scheduling and student assessment; fewer than a third of the districts, however, have been willing to hand over authority in areas relating to budgeting and personnel action. Table 13 shows that a small percentage of districts also grant schools waivers from various district and state requirements.

One area that is highly sensitive is that of personnel hiring and firing. As Table 12 shows, the assignment, hiring, and firing of personnel are the areas for which districts are least likely to give schools authority. We also found in the case studies that school staff were least comfortable assuming responsibility in these areas. Teachers especially can find it difficult to make decisions about their peers—and, of course, teacher agreements sometimes spell out the criteria for promotion, removal, and reassignment. In one school in a relatively small town we visited, an active school council faced with the possibility of an unanticipated personnel opening in the school decided not to get directly involved in hiring a new staff member because they "were not ready to take on that level of responsibility," according to a teacher. In another school, the principal arranged for all personnel selections to be made by teams of teachers and administrators, with the principal taking responsibility for the final hiring, partly to insulate teachers from potential problems.

Table 12

AREAS IN WHICH DISTRICTS GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO SCHOOLS

Area of Discretion	Percentage of Districts
Staff development	68
Selection of curriculum and materials	65
School schedule	45
Student assessment	45
Supplemental instruction (e.g., Chapter 1)	33
School budget	29
Staff assignment	23
Hiring/firing of school personnel	15

Table reads: 68 percent of the districts with school-based reform provided schools authority to make decisions regarding staff development.

Source: District survey.

Table 13

DISTRICT WAIVERS TO SCHOOLS TO FACILITATE SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

Waivers From:	Percentage of Districts
District requirements	11
State requirements	9
Union/contract requirements	2
Other requirements	1

Table reads: 11 percent of the districts with school-based reform granted schools waivers from district requirements.

Source: District survey.

School Staff Ownership of and Attitudes Toward the Process of Change

Related to the issue of staff collaboration is a second key component of school-based reform: the degree to which school staff feel as though they own and control the change process. Ownership is an ambiguous concept, yet it was evident to us that in some schools, teachers felt as though they were undertaking new practices solely as the result of the decisions of others—for example, because of a district mandate for school involvement in a particular program. At the other extreme, we visited schools where the change process clearly reflected the ideas and vision of the teachers. In some instances, control rested at the school level, but in the hands of an administrator, not the teachers.

More typically, the story of reform involved a struggle among the internal ideas of the school staff, incorporating and reflecting various outside pressures and ideas. Often, the initial idea for the school-based reform came from the district or state, which established some kind of program or new policy. School staff then became more active in planning and implementing the specific changes. These general trends are reflected in our survey data. Table 14 compares the relative responsibility of state, district, and school staff for initiating and coordinating school-based reform. Two-thirds of the school-based reform efforts were initiated at the state and district levels, but most were coordinated on a day-to-day basis by school staff. Importantly, the survey results also show that school staff, on average, play an important role in planning school-based reform efforts (Table 15).

Table 14

RELATIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF STATE, DISTRICT, AND SCHOOL STAFF IN INITIATING AND COORDINATING SCHOOL-BASED REFORM
(Percentage of Districts)

	Level at Which Reform Effort Was Initiated[a]	Level at Which Reform Effort Was Coordinated[b]
State	9	0
District	58	28
School	38	57

Table reads: Of all the districts that have school-based reform, 9 percent of the reform efforts were initiated at the state level

[a] Percentages sum to more than 100 because in some districts, responsibility for initiating the reform effort was taken by persons at more than one level of the system.

[b] Percentages do not sum to 100 because of missing or erroneous data and "Other" responses.

Source: District survey.

Table 15

GROUPS' INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

Groups Involved in Planning	Mean Rating[a]
District level	
District staff	4.2
School board members	2.7
School level	
School administrators	4.5
Teachers	4.3
Building-level teams	3.9
Community	
Parents	2.6
Community representatives	2.2

Table reads: In those districts with school-based reform, respondents gave district staff a 4.2 mean rating of extent of involvement (on a 1- to 5-point scale) in planning the school-based reform effort.

[a] Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, where 5 = extremely involved, 4 = very involved, 3 = moderately involved, 2 = somewhat involved, and 1 = not at all involved.

Source: District survey.

The five schools' portraits we drew above provide examples of the variation in the degree to which school staff feel ownership over their reform efforts. Petersburg Elementary faced a series of state-mandated reforms and had begun to participate in a districtwide effective schools process under pressure from the superintendent. The school staff were struggling to make some sense of the reforms for their own school—and without much assistance from a recalcitrant principal. Cicely Elementary provides a contrasting case: change started with the efforts of a cadre of teachers and grew piecemeal as the school responded to and took advantage of various outside programs to promote their own agenda for change.

These examples also underscore the evolving nature of school staff ownership of change. Often, the impetus for reform is external, or confined to a small set of actors in the school. Only over time does it typically come to be owned by a majority of staff members—and then only in some cases. Moreover, we visited schools where control and ownership of the reform process moved in the opposite direction, slowly slipping away from school staff. In one school we visited, which had served as an example of strong teacher control in the district, the principal had increasingly ignored teachers' concerns until the teachers chose to disband the school council rather than make decisions that were never implemented.

Professional Capacity Building

The third component of reform that helps us distinguish among schools stems in large part from the first two. As we discuss in more detail in the following chapter, providing teachers with more opportunities to think critically about their work with one another and to help devise ways to improve schools often creates significant challenges for teachers, some of which they may be ill prepared to tackle. Consequently, most of the reform efforts we studied involved some form of opportunities for professional development. For example, in the case of Cicely Elementary, professional development opportunities in new approaches to science instruction for a core of teachers proved to be the catalyst for the reform effort; the continued availability of these opportunities served as a key resource for involving larger numbers of teachers and maintaining the reform process.

As Table 16 shows, the provision of staff development for teachers was the most common strategy that districts employed to support school-based reform efforts, taking place in 82 percent of the districts. Not surprisingly, instruction- and planning-related issues are the most common topics of these professional development opportunities (Table 17).

Table 16

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORMS

Strategies	Percentage of Districts
Staff development for teachers	82
Revised expectations for student achievement	60
Revised teaching methods	60
Revised curriculum	59
Staff development for administrators	58
New planning processes	50
Revised expectations for student behavior	44
Revised methods of student assessment	44
School-based management	41

Table reads: 82 percent of the districts with school-based reform used staff development for teachers to achieve their goals.

Source: District survey.

Table 17

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS INVOLVED IN SCHOOL-BASED REFORMS

Area Addressed in Staff Development	Percentage of Districts
Effective instruction	76
Schoolwide planning	63
School improvement/effective schools	59
Shared decision making	56
Special student populations	56
Parent involvement	54
Instructional leadership	51
Alternative assessment	36

Table reads: 76 percent of the districts with school-based reform provided staff development in the area of effective instruction.

Source: District survey.

The case study data suggest that in some schools and districts, professional development is not only common but is also taking on a broader definition. Although many schools we visited follow the traditional pattern of providing isolated, short-term workshops for teachers, some are seeking new, more flexible approaches to providing learning opportunities. Examples of these new approaches include:

- **Periodic visits to other schools.** Some schools and districts have taken the initiative to help teachers visit other schools that have already begun experimenting with new ideas. For example, in Kentucky, we visited a district where teachers had traveled to Ohio, North Carolina, and Indiana to observe schools that had implemented multiage groupings in the primary years.

- **Creating cadres of teacher leaders.** To assure that all teachers in a school can have access to new ideas, some places have begun to identify teacher leaders who receive training from outside experts and who then have the responsibility of bringing those ideas back to the rest of the teachers in the school.

- **New relationships with universities.** Empire High School, discussed above, made arrangements with a local university to hold graduate-level courses on the school campus. These courses reflect, in part, the voiced needs of the teachers.

- **Building ongoing capacity.** A few schools and districts have banded together to support ongoing consortia or centers for professional development. Here resources are pooled to ensure the regular availability of technical assistance.

These strategies for helping to support teachers have two elements that differentiate them from traditional approaches to teacher training. First, many attempt to bring expertise closer to the school, including helping teachers to become the experts themselves. Second, they are based on a vision of professional development that is ongoing and dynamic, designed to create capacity for ongoing opportunities to meet potentially unforeseen needs.

Degree of Focus on Instructional Practice

A fourth component of reform involves the extent to which the improvement effort focuses on changing the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. Certainly, a central reason most schools and districts become involved in school-based reform is to improve what takes place in the classroom. The survey data provide support for this perspective. The quality of instruction and student achievement are the two most highly rated reasons for initiating reform efforts (Table 18). School-based reform efforts in a majority (75 percent) of districts seek to revise teaching or classroom content to meet their reform goals (Table 19). Moreover, effective

instruction is the most common topic of staff development activities for teachers involved in school-based reform (Table 17, above).

Table 18

IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR INITIATING SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

Reason	Mean Rating[a]
Quality of instruction	4.1
Student achievement	4.0
Needs of disadvantaged students	3.6
Availability of funds	2.7
District mandate	2.7
State mandate	2.3
Chapter 1 requirements	2.1
Chapter 2 funds availability	2.0
Community pressure	1.9

Table reads: In those districts with school-based reform, respondents gave quality of instruction a 4.1 mean rating of importance (on a 1- to 5-point scale) as a reason for initiating the school-based reform effort.

[a] Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, where 5 = extremely important, 4 = very important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = somewhat important, and 1 = not at all important.

Source: District survey.

From a different perspective, these survey results are surprising in the extent to which many school-based reform efforts are **not** focused on improving what takes place in the classroom. Table 19 also shows, for example, that change efforts in fewer than half the districts (42 percent) involve revising **both** teaching and curriculum. Moreover, 18 percent report not seeking to change **either** content or teaching.

Overall, these findings from the surveys are consistent with what we encountered in the case studies. Increasing student learning and improving teaching were the central goals stated by the teachers and administrators with whom we spoke. Yet, especially when improvement efforts were just beginning to get under way, teachers and administrators often focused their efforts on the process of implementing a reform and on improving those aspects of school life that were easiest to fix.

Table 19

EXTENT TO WHICH REFORM STRATEGIES FOCUS ON CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Strategies	Percentage of Districts
Revise **either** instruction or curriculum	75
Revise **both** instruction and curriculum	42
Revise **neither** instruction nor curriculum	18

Table reads: 75 percent of the districts with school-based reform sought to revise either instruction or curriculum as part of their reform effort.

Note: Percentages should not add to 100 because those districts that revise both curriculum and instruction are also counted as districts that revise either instruction or curriculum.

Source: District survey.

Petersburg Elementary, which we described in our portraits above, illustrates this phenomenon. Here, a school staff with little history of conscious improvement efforts spent a great deal of its energy negotiating the process of how and where to meet and the balance of decision-making responsibility between teachers and the principal. Moreover, the recent changes in the school process, although important, had little immediate effect on classroom practice. There is a new teachers' lounge, a new bus lane was paved, and the school was cleaned and painted. Such improvements are much easier and less controversial than fundamental shifts in teaching and learning. Yet, for many schools they may be needed first steps toward reforming the basic business of schools: classroom instruction.

Empire High School illustrates a different approach to improving teaching and learning. At this school, shifts in governance led to interesting changes in the organization of instruction. Grade levels were abolished in favor of two "divisions" of students. Within these divisions, teachers and students were organized into cross-age teams (5 teachers and 125 students) that provide teachers with flexibility in scheduling and student grouping. These are interesting and potentially radical shifts, but as of our visits, the day-to-day instructional activities of most teachers and most students had changed very little, according to the teachers with whom we spoke. Only a portion of the teachers and students were involved in the new groupings, and only a portion of those teachers were making use of the new flexibility to change day-to-day instruction.

Cicely Elementary, one of the cases we presented above, shows how classroom practice can be changed as an integral part of the reform process. This school actually began its reform process by implementing classroom-level changes such as hands-on learning, the organization of instruction in thematic units, multigraded classrooms, authentic assessment, and cooperative learning. Concurrently with these changes, the school has changed the decision making and governance process in the school.

Degree of Focus on Outcomes and Equity

Finally, we turn to the issues of outcomes and equity to help us distinguish among reform efforts. We have already seen that most respondents to our survey say that reforms are designed to address shortcomings in instruction and student achievement. But we have also noted that, at least in the case study sample, many school staff fail to move their improvement efforts into the classroom. So, to what extent do teachers and administrators focus on student outcomes as they proceed with reforms; and as they look at outcomes, to what extent are they concerned with differences among key groups? Such questions, of course, were central to the effective schools philosophy: simultaneously to improve achievement for all students and to close the gap between students of different ethnic groups and social classes.

Generally, districts and schools have some data available to them that they can use for evaluative purposes—and in fact, some 69 percent of districts do report conducting evaluations of their reforms. The majority of districts measure student achievement, most often by the use of some kind of standardized tests (Table 20).

Table 20

TYPES OF STUDENT OUTCOMES MEASURED FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES

Type of Student Outcome	Percentage of Districts
Standardized achievement test	55
Other indicators of student achievement	49
Student behavior	42
Student attitudes	39
Special student populations	29
Dropout rates	29

Table reads: 55 percent of the districts with school-based reform used standardized achievement tests for evaluation purposes.

Source: District survey.

The survey data, however, allow us to say little about the quality of these evaluations and about how the evaluative information is used. The case study data shed light on these issues. First, we found one set of schools in which evaluation and a focus on student outcomes were virtually nonexistent. In these schools, reforms were often just getting off the ground and school staff had not yet focused their efforts on evaluation—sometimes because they felt it was too early to look at student outcomes, sometimes because they had simply not begun to think about measuring the effects of their work.

In a second set of schools, teachers were conscious of the need to assess student outcomes, but they felt as though the tests being used in the schools—typically standardized, multiple-choice instruments—were inappropriate to measure the effects of their new approaches to instruction. Even when schools and districts were experimenting with alternative forms of assessment—including portfolios of student work and performance-based assessment—teachers were struggling to understand and interpret these new measures. In these cases, the focus on student outcomes was often mired in discussions about appropriate measures.

In a third set of schools, regular and critical analysis of student progress was built into the reform effort. Many of these schools had begun by following the effective schools model, with its clear outcome focus and regular cycle of needs assessment, planning, and evaluation. South Mission High School is an example of such a school: following the effective schools correlates, it created a committee whose sole function was to monitor student progress and report back to the leadership team. The team took student outcomes seriously and was able to track achievement gains over time.

The South Mission team was also able to examine the degree to which student achievement changed among different subgroups in the school. The team was concerned that school improvement should not simply translate into better schools for more advantaged students. Again, following the effective schools model, they disaggregated student outcome data by student ethnicity to ensure that all students in the school were benefiting from the reforms.

When we look at the national survey data, we see that fewer than half of all districts disaggregate evaluation data by various student characteristics (Table 21). Most commonly, districts report analyzing data by students' prior achievement to assess whether reforms have differential effects on students of varying achievement levels. Fewer districts examine data by gender, ethnicity, and family income.

Table 21

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY WHICH OUTCOME DATA WERE DISAGGREGATED

Student Characteristic	Percentage of Districts
Prior achievement	48
Gender	28
Family income	28
Ethnicity	24

Table reads: 48 percent of the districts with school-based reform disaggregated student outcome data by prior achievement of students.

Source: District survey.

In summary, we have identified five key components of school-based reform—staff collaboration, staff sense of ownership, the focus on teaching and curriculum, professional capacity building, and the focus on student outcomes and equity. Taken individually, these can help us to sort out the complexities of any school's change efforts by providing a set of dimensions along which a school's reforms can be placed. For example, we can ask the simple question, "To what extent has the school staff targeted improving classroom instruction and content?" Such questions make it easier to compare among schools, to address their strengths and weaknesses, and to make inferences about the effects of the reform effort at the school level, to which we turn in the next section.

Summary

From the data presented in this chapter, we can draw a number of key conclusions. First, districts report that school-based reform is widespread—according to survey responses somewhere between a fifth and two-thirds of districts have schools involved in reform efforts, depending on the definition of reform we use. These same respondents say that reform is taking place at all levels of the K-12 system, across poor and wealthy communities, and in large and small districts.

Our experience in sampling for and conducting the case studies suggests that these figures exaggerate the amount of real change taking place in schools. Being labeled as "involved in

reform" is desirable and the survey data likely reflect a certain amount of response bias. Moreover, the case studies also demonstrate that being involved in a reform effort means many different things in different schools—often involving few changes in what takes place on a daily basis either among school staff or between teachers and students.

To illustrate the range of reforms, we presented five contrasting cases of improvement efforts. We have concluded that each case of reform has certain unique characteristics, reflecting the goals, needs, and resources of a particular school and district. We have also argued that reform labels like "effective schools" and "restructuring" help us to understand what is really taking place within schools. Regardless of the form of the initial reform, we found that change efforts tend to evolve over time—in some cases becoming more comprehensive and focusing on teaching and learning, while in other cases beginning to fall apart with no measurable effects on the school.

Finally, we have argued that in spite of the unique aspects of each case of school reform, we are able to pinpoint key characteristics of reform that can help us to profitably compare schools involved in change (e.g., the degree of focus on instruction and the extent of meaningful collaboration among school staff).

3 THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM ON SCHOOLS, CLASSROOMS, AND STUDENTS

In the preceding chapter, we described the extent and nature of school-based reform across the survey and case study samples. Here, we examine the effects of these reforms on principals and teachers, on curriculum and instruction, and on student experiences. We first discuss how the increased collaboration and new professional development strategies involved in many reform efforts create both opportunities and pressures for school staff. We then address the effects of these opportunities on teachers' attitudes. Next, we review our findings on how shifts in curricula and instructional strategies affect what takes place in classrooms. In doing so, we discuss how teachers and other staff assess student outcomes and address equity concerns in what is in many schools a period of flux.

We provide two caveats in advance of examining the school-level effects of these reforms. The first is to reiterate that in many schools that consider themselves involved in reform, little change is taking place. Therefore, as we discuss the effects of specific change efforts—e.g., the involvement of teachers in governance issues—our findings of "effects" are limited to those schools where such reforms are taking place—in this example, schools where authority relationships have changed. Second, we emphasize that change in schools is not necessarily positive. As two of the portraits we presented in the preceding chapter illustrate, implementing change in schools can do more to disrupt school life than improve it.

New Opportunities and Pressures for School Staff

The most immediate effect of many school-based reform efforts is to create a set of new opportunities and pressures for school staff. The improvement efforts we studied often presented teachers and principals with unprecedented possibilities for growth and professional development. At the same time, these efforts put demands on staff that they were often unprepared to deal with. In some cases, the opportunities and demands contradicted one another and placed certain teachers and administrators in difficult situations. In this section, we describe these effects on school staff, relying primarily on our case study data.

The Changing Roles of Principals

In most of the schools we visited, the individual most directly affected by the school-based reform was the principal, whose roles vis-à-vis teachers, central office staff, and even his or her own peers were being redefined. In schools granted more authority by districts, principals gained a greater degree of control over important budgetary and personnel decisions. In particular, school-level authority to hire teachers gave some principals a new opportunity to build consensus and further their visions. In such schools, principals were empowered to "employ teachers who were committed to work with the school's vision rather than against it" (Louis & Smith, 1991: 12). A principal in one rural elementary school we visited admitted that she had stacked "the teacher attitude deck" in her favor by aggressively reassigning teachers who had not demonstrated a willingness to expend high levels of energy on the school. Another principal hired teachers in early March for the following school year. In this way, he felt he could begin the socialization process early.

In some instances, reforms offered principals the chance to develop district-level responsibilities as the distinction between schools' and districts' authority began to blur, especially in small school districts. A number of districts specifically sought to create "flattened hierarchies" that gave principals the opportunity to undertake functions previously within the domain of district personnel, such as serving as curriculum department heads. In other districts, principals and central office staff forged new authority-sharing relationships through conscious design.

- For instance, in one suburban site, the elementary school principals created their own advisory council, which took the initiative in issuing recommendations and policy statements to central office staff, especially in the area of curriculum. These principals began articulating to central office staff their vision of "the principalship in the 1990s." This vision portrays principals as instructional leaders in their buildings and as proactive planners and priority setters within the district.

- In a second site, urban principals have formed teams. Each team has a liaison person who meets with the superintendent once a month to gather information, raise issues, and discuss topics. The results of these meetings are then disseminated among team members.

Yet, if principals have more authority and expertise in some areas, school-based reform often takes away responsibility in other areas as, increasingly, leadership is becoming less the sole province of the principal. As one administrator aptly noted, "We have moved from the era of the sage on the stage to the guide by the side. That's my role, and not everyone is ready to accept it yet." As schools create councils and other decision-making bodies, teachers take on more

responsibility for school-level decisions. These changes put a great deal of pressure on principals to change their behavior and become more facilitative toward school staff. This can be a difficult transition for some principals who were trained to be administrators and decision makers—as one principal told us, "This democracy is hell!"

The lessening of principals' direct responsibility for all decisions created severe conflicts in certain situations. Some district or state reform policies decreased principals' direct authority while holding them solely or largely responsible for school performance. This contradiction led a principal in Kentucky to comment that the changes under way "affect principals more than anyone else." Principals whose jobs continue to be tied to their schools' achievement on standardized test scores understandably experience difficulty in relinquishing power. Another principal felt that he could "only give up so much power because the district expects me to be in control."

Other principals in our sample encountered similarly conflicting attitudes among school staff when implementing more participatory types of governance. In one school, where a new principal instituted shared decision making—partly in response to a statewide reform initiative and partly to increase teacher morale—several teachers faulted him for what they perceived as an abdication of his leadership role. He, however, has adamantly insisted on maintaining a facilitative, nondirective posture toward major school decisions. The effect of his stance on the school's progress remains to be seen.

The Changing Roles of Teachers

Similar to principals, teachers in schools undergoing reform face a series of new pressures and opportunities. As we discussed in the preceding chapter, a primary effect of many school-based reforms on teachers involves structural changes in their working roles—changes that serve to break down the traditional barriers between isolated classrooms. One obvious impact has been to provide teachers with a more prominent presence and voice in school governance issues or what Duke and Gansneder (1990) have labeled the "managerial" aspect of decision making. Opening arenas such as school budget allocations and teacher hiring and evaluation for teacher input through such mechanisms as school site councils has helped teachers to feel more professional and has raised morale. Increased participation in decision making, for example, meant increased control over decisions affecting their working conditions—and this made many teachers feel more professional. This was especially true for those teachers at the center of the reform activities at their schools. One teacher said, "When we feel that we are not powerless to make a difference, we become more willing to participate and be more professional."

Just as important, and more frequent, have been changes that have allowed teachers to interact with one another to make "technical" decisions that focus on students and instruction. Although we found a definite trend toward increased teacher participation in school-level governance, not all sites allowed teachers access to the full range of decision making. In many sites, there was no district precedent for sharing governance, so these limits did not necessarily contradict teachers' comparative autonomy with respect to instructional reform. Hence, more doors were open to increased teacher decision-making authority over instructional and disciplinary issues. In one site where teachers developed and administered programs, it appeared that, within the domain of curriculum and instruction, nothing was off limits. So although the school's governance structure was not changing, teachers were helping to continually remake the means by which student learning occurred.

A positive effect of increased teacher authority in instructional decision making has been increased teacher communication across the school. For example, in one high school, the participation of teachers of various disciplines on the effective schools correlates committee has brought individuals who did not previously interact into contact with one another. One result has been the stimulation of teacher conversation and interest in coordinating curriculum planning. In another case, a principal reported that such conversations have better prepared teachers to deal with, and plan for, new student cohorts as "sending" teachers alert "receiving" teachers to specific needs of children and as several teachers begin to become familiar with each student. Another principal noted, "When we began, teachers were doing their own things well, but they were not working together. Now they are sharing and bouncing things off each other more." In a midwestern site where the principal has opened the reform process to teachers, things do not always run smoothly, but everyone has a sense that progress is being made. There is continual brainstorming and troubleshooting between participants, and difficulties are being ironed out satisfactorily.

Many of the reforms instituted had staff development components. In these cases, there have often been positive effects on teachers' professional capacity. For example, in an elementary school site we visited, teachers had received support in the form of school staff development resources and occasional mini-grants. Such resources served to build teacher capacity, and the principal expected teachers to then take control of developing and instituting programs to address student problems. This site boasted a number of such programs, and teachers displayed the energy needed to administer them. Other teachers who had received training from outside experts in turn trained their colleagues at the school site. Some districts and schools instituted "turnkey training" or a "trainer of trainers" model of staff development. This increased capacity has spilled

over to arenas beyond the school site. Some teachers served on town- or districtwide committees with the goal of developing core or integrated curricula. Our case study sample provided examples of teachers in various collaborative arrangements with university departments of education, serving in positions such as consultants and adjunct faculty members. Teachers worked on state-level subject area projects. Teachers gave districtwide workshops and made presentations at conferences. Staff at one western site felt "informed and professional... frequently asked to speak at conferences." Teachers' participation in and reception at these presentations gave them the validation for their efforts and talents that is often absent from their usual teaching routine.

For some teachers, along with this renewed sense of professionalism came a desire to shape reforms to meet their schools' and students' particular needs. According to one teacher, "In the beginning, the new ideas came from [the principal]. However, now the teachers are seeking new ideas out on their own." A junior high school presented a most interesting case of a school staff's having developed tremendous problem-solving capacity through a series of training experiences funded by state school improvement and effective schools programs. The district office subsequently wrote a proposal to receive federal funds for restructuring, naming the schools to participate—without informing any of the school staff until just before the proposal was submitted. When the funds were awarded, the district attempted to mandate that the schools become magnet schools. The principal and staff at the junior high school rebelled and eventually succeeded in convincing central office staff to allow them to proceed with the transition to middle school in which they had been engaged before the receipt of restructuring funds. Here is an example of increasing professionalism and sense of control at the school level putting new pressures on district-level personnel!

One immediate effect of these increased opportunities for participation in decision making, joint planning, and professional development experiences was to put great pressure on teachers' limited time. In some cases, these experiences took away from their time in the classroom. In others, it just meant an overall increase in teacher workload. In some districts and schools, teachers received release time for these activities—for example, the principal at an elementary school site eked out some extra time for his teachers by devoting school funds to hiring substitutes for two days at the end of each of the first three of the four grading periods. But generally, teachers simply had to work longer hours, and the effects can be negative. We visited a high school in which the mathematics department came together to completely rewrite the school's mathematics curriculum. The teachers worked before school, stayed late, and gave up their weekends. By the end of the school year, however, they had not experienced the success

they hoped for and were completely burned out. Some of the teachers in the school still have not recovered; others are taking a much more cautious approach to incorporating additional reforms into the school.

Yet, the teachers we interviewed generally reported a willingness to expend the necessary time and energy because of the potential benefits of the reforms. In a number of sites, simply instituting practices to bring teachers together to discuss issues that are central to their work lives was sufficient to raise teacher morale and enable teachers to view themselves as professionals in ways not always achieved in the classroom. For example, after one school held a retreat for all teachers, the principal reported that "many staff members commented on how this initial event made them feel like they were being treated professionally for the first time." The effect of these changes can be seen in one teacher's remark: "I come to work thinking, 'This is fun.' We care about our school. Sometimes I'm here all day on Saturday. We're always changing. I'm always learning."

For both administrators and teachers, then, the process of reform at the school site has meant certain opportunities for growth and development—in some cases leading to more ownership and conscious attempts to control the course of change to meet the schools' needs. In other schools, these same opportunities have become burdens for teachers. Yet, even in the best of circumstances, changes in teachers' and administrators' roles in the school make little difference if they do not translate into classroom-level improvements. In the next section, we discuss the effects of reforms on teachers' attitudes and practices in the classroom as well as on students' learning experiences.

Effects on Teaching and Learning in the Classroom

We did not design this study to investigate classroom effects intensively. However, in each school we visited, we tried to spend some time observing classrooms, and we focused our interviews with teachers, school administrators, and district staff on classroom teaching and learning. We also learned about changes in curriculum through examination of school and district plans. In each school, we also requested information on student assessment and evaluations of the effects of the change effort.

From these various data sources, we were able to gain an understanding of the classroom-level effects of school-based reform in many of the case study sites. Below, we first describe the effects of reforms on teachers' expectations of students and of what should occur in the

classroom. We then examine the effects of curriculum and assessment reforms on teaching and learning. Finally, we examine the impact of reform on students and their experiences in school.

We reiterate here, however, that many of the schools we studied had just begun to implement reforms, so that, in the majority of the case study sites, we found little effect at the classroom level. Teachers were still receiving training, and some had not yet "bought into" all of the reforms being touted within their districts. Second, even in schools with reforms well under way, classroom practice was not always directly targeted for change. Nationally, we found that nearly 1 in 5 (18 percent) of the reforms sought to improve neither curriculum nor content (see Table 19 in the preceding chapter). Finally, even among those reforms aimed at changing teaching and learning, sites varied in the degrees to which actual impact was occurring.

New Conceptions of Students

Many of the reforms we observed have penetrated to the classroom level by first affecting teachers' views of students, which in turn led to changes in classroom policies and curricula. Two common changes in teachers' attitudes concerned expectations for student performance and an increased sensitivity to developmental issues.

Higher Expectations for Student Learning. One of the themes running through many of the reforms we observed was the belief that all students can learn. Whether we were studying traditional effective schools programs or more radical restructuring initiatives, the common rhetoric was to speak of students as able consumers of knowledge—given the proper instruction from teachers.

An example of this new perspective comes from some of the schools (in three of the case study states) implementing Outcome-Based Education (OBE). These reforms involve mastery learning and its underlying belief that every child can achieve mastery-level understanding in the classroom. This reform is based in part on Bloom's notion that "most students can attain a high level of learning capacity...if they are given time to achieve mastery" (quoted in Tanner & Tanner, 1980: 422). The process involves teaching, testing, then reteaching or enriching, and, finally, retesting. In one district that implemented OBE approximately 5 years ago, the effect of this reform was profound for some teachers who were undergoing their "first paradigm shift... viewing grades, mastery, and the possibility for student success in different terms." Teachers who once believed that certain students would fail to achieve at high levels changed their expectations and believed that with sufficient help, all students could achieve at higher levels than previously thought.

This shift in perspective has been translated into new policies and practices in various ways. For example, in one site, in addition to the statement in the student handbook that the school "maintains a high standard of academic achievement," a policy has been set that students must have at least a 2.0 GPA to participate in extracurricular activities. According to the school plan, "no students are placed in low-level classes with watered-down curricula or remedial skill-based activities." This statement reflects a general trend among the sites we visited that tracking, for the most part, was no longer an automatic or acceptable instructional arrangement—especially for at-risk students. The trend, instead, seems to be toward detracked schools with greater reliance on heterogeneous grouping. Similarly, schools seemed to approach "special needs" children by including them in the regular classroom program as much as possible. Special education teachers and other resource staff increasingly worked within the regular classroom, helping those students with special needs. Policies such as these have the effect of communicating to students that, given the right conditions, they are expected to perform well.

Changes in school staff's attitudes were not limited to raising expectations. In some sites, teacher beliefs about "proper" classroom behavior and the conditions necessary for learning were also being affected by the reforms. Along with more challenging learning goals, teachers were revising their perceptions of how students should behave in the classroom. One teacher described ways in which her thinking about the classroom had changed over the past 6 years. "There's more sense now of making education more fun for kids. Teachers are more likely to feel that it is okay to be noisy in the classroom.... Also, there has been a change in the content.... I place less emphasis on memorization, more on thinking. I am also changing how I think about tests; I am constantly saying, 'Do they really need to know this?'"

A Growing Awareness of Developmental Issues. Concurrent with these changes in teachers' perspectives of students has come a new focus on the developmental appropriateness of classroom organization and content. A number of sites were involved in the reform of middle schools, which focuses on student needs beyond the academic, evidencing a growing awareness of, and sensitivity to, early adolescents in our society. A principal of a middle school described his position as a vision become reality. He told us that in his previous job as an elementary school principal, parents of students would tell him about their children's "painful transition" from elementary to junior high school. He jumped at the opportunity to bring his vision of middle school education to reality when the district opened a middle school to accommodate the growing student population. An example of a feature of the school that caters to adolescents can be found in the curriculum. The literature-based English/language arts curriculum included works chosen to reflect the adolescent experience, such as *The Outsiders*, which discusses gangs, social status,

and social conditions, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which covers prejudice and acceptance of others. According to the teaching staff, the ultimate goal was to empower students, and the classroom environments were built toward this end. Teachers were encouraged to use cooperative learning groups, active learning, and hands-on learning, to accommodate diverse learning styles and interests, and to build on the peer relationships that are so important at this stage of their students' lives.

In a similar manner, the movement toward multi-age grouping at the elementary school level (which we saw a few sites pioneering) takes a view of children that departs from the belief that all students learn at the same pace. Rather, this reform—which has both affected teachers' traditional thinking about children's learning styles and been affected by teachers' growing knowledge about child development—acknowledges the individuality of each child and calls for a reconception of teachers' expectations for children. Students are also affected in that school staff begin to examine critically the artificial achievement standards previously taken for granted and imposed on students. This reform is having the effect of removing the stigma that is sometimes too readily placed on a student when he or she progresses at a pace that differs from the "norm."

Changing Curriculum and Instruction to Match Higher Expectations

Shifts in teachers' perceptions of students did not always affect classroom practice. Yet, when changes in teachers' attitudes and expertise were matched by changes in curriculum and instruction, there was a clear trend toward the adoption of approaches that focus on critical thinking, make clear how what is being taught has meaning for students' real lives, involve students in the act of learning through hands-on activities, and make the connections between subjects more obvious. Curriculum is being affected by teachers coming to it with a student-centered rather than a subject-matter-centered perspective.

Across our sample sites, we saw many of the same ideas influencing the ways in which teachers were teaching—in almost all subject areas. In mathematics, we saw a remarkable convergence of opinion that students would learn better through hands-on activities. Manipulatives were employed to give students a more conceptual rather than rote understanding of mathematics and, in some cases, science. In these two subject areas, there was a move toward helping students see the applications of knowledge to the real world.

In language arts, curricular reforms centered around process writing and integrated approaches to language arts, although districts varied in the degree to which they were willing to adopt such curricula. For instance, central office staff responsible for curriculum in one urban

district viewed inventive spelling with suspicion and did not think the majority of parents in the community were ready for it. But the philosophy of drawing connections across artificially separated written expression skills has seeped into most of the schools we studied that are seriously reviewing what takes place between teachers and students. The use of literature-based readers or trade books was part of this reform trend, again to varying degrees.

Naturally, we found more consistency in the rhetoric regarding approaches to curriculum and instruction than in their actual implementation. Still, a number of schools had gone quite far in putting new ways of teaching and learning in place. The following are examples drawn from our sample sites. These activities illustrate the use of skills taken from several disciplines to accomplish the assigned tasks as well as the connection of subject matter to "real-life" issues and a hands-on approach to learning:

- First-graders at one of our rural mountain sites were asked to go home, interview their family members about their favorite foods, record the "data," bring it back to class for analysis, and then produce reports using bar graphs and illustrations to demonstrate their findings to their peers.

- In another rural site, teachers initiated a program to teach students in grades 4-6 how to use money. Students receive stipends for attending school but are charged rent for their desks and materials. They can earn extra coupons for good behavior and be fined for infractions (e.g., being late to school). When students save enough "money," they can make purchases at the school store. If discipline problems lead to a deficit, the student performs community service to erase it.

A second theme of curricular reform in the study sites is a move toward the integration of teaching and content across traditional subject matter boundaries. Movements toward core curricula, thematic or interdisciplinary units, and the like have pushed district- and school-level staff to think more carefully about their rationales for including various topics within the subjects they teach. In those sites where teachers enjoy shared decision making and have received capacity-building staff development, staff communication and collaboration regarding curriculum have increased. With these factors in place, the integration of curriculum or the development of thematic units in the curriculum is facilitated. At all grade levels, interdisciplinary efforts were under way. For instance:

- In one elementary school in the Northeast, school staff had jointly developed thematic units such as flight, architecture, folklore, and rain forests. The hallways throughout the school were decorated with colorful jungle motifs. When second graders met the goal of reading 200 books as set by the parent-teacher organization, the PTO bought an acre of land to preserve. One of the classes created a rain forest, complete with waterfall and canopy, inside the classroom. The library purchased books about rain forests. The

primary grades were planning a trip to see an animated movie, "Fern Gully," about rain forests. One teacher reported: "The kids don't really realize they're working, learning. They get so involved in the themes. One student told me that he hadn't done anything all day." This teacher then brought out all the work the class had accomplished—reading and understanding directions, discussing, working cooperatively, speaking in front of a group. "They're not aware that they're learning a great deal. Years ago it was textbooks, textbooks. So boring."

- In a western school that was combining Outcome-Based Education with an integrated curriculum, clustering, and block scheduling, seventh-grade students undertook a mock trial project. They spent 3 weeks researching and preparing legal cases for and against an issue of key importance, and then argued the case before a local superior court judge. The activity captivated the imagination of the children; combined reading, analysis, information gathering, synthesis, and presentation skills; and culminated in an activity that represented a high-quality product or outcome for an authentic audience (a key tenet of recent Outcome-Based Education theory).

A third theme running through these curricular reforms has been the use of computers and other technology in the classroom. Nearly all teachers we spoke with have been touched in some way by computers, although not all reform efforts use technology as an explicit strategy to improve curriculum and instruction. In a few cases, reform efforts purposefully included support for teachers' and students' use of computers and other technology by providing funding for equipment (computer hardware, software), experienced staff to provide instruction, and staff development in the use of computers in the classroom. For example, one elementary school in our sample had received $35,000 from the district to develop the first computer-assisted classroom in the state. The program was initiated by the school board to see how technology could affect learning styles and ability levels. The entire class curriculum is computer-based, resulting in significant achievement gains in comparison to the school's same-grade noncomputer classrooms.

Although the use of technology was not a major reform issue in our sample, the fact that technology was at least a part of the story in many places is worthy of note.

Improving Assessment to Measure the Effects of Classroom Reforms

As teachers and administrators were putting new curricula in place, they were necessarily grappling with (and, in some cases, avoiding) the role of assessment in providing improved education for students. A major effect of the reforms in schools attempting to improve classroom practice has been the raising of teachers' consciousness about the limits, uses, and impacts of testing. In particular, teachers appeared concerned that limitations of standardized tests do not

allow students to fully demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers raised the issue of the need for the inclusion of performance or alternative assessments. However, the majority of the sites we visited had not yet obtained or implemented these new assessments.

In general, then, school-level staff have moved ahead with alternative curricula in advance of appropriate test instruments, creating difficulties. For instance, teachers in a Kentucky elementary school had recently instituted multi-age grouping but had reached no consensus on how to assess student progress. Teachers in the K-3 primary program felt that it was unfair to students to begin the program without having a clear set of exit criteria. They also felt that it was impossible to create a new curriculum without knowing what the criteria were. At that point, the state had set guidelines about essential instructional practices but had not yet established "what students should know and be able to do" at that grade level.

A number of sites, however, did have in place some type of student assessment that differed from the traditional standardized test. One of the more common methods was to use writing portfolios as a method of assessing performance in language arts. In Kentucky, the state has instituted a new assessment system that relies more heavily on portfolios and performance events. In that state, students in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades were going through performance-based assessment in mathematics during our visits. A number of schools have instituted more qualitative forms of student assessment that provide for more teacher judgment. Two elementary schools in our sample that have instituted multi-age grouping have developed alternatives to the traditional report cards: narrative conference forms. Two schools—an elementary and a junior high—in the Midwest are employing mastery learning assessments. A western district was also redesigning report cards to align with the core curriculum, which spelled out concepts that students had to master. Teachers also used a computerized item book to construct tests aligned with the state framework—for formative as well as summative assessment of student mastery.

A major effect of these alternative forms of assessment on students has been to push them to apply the knowledge they are acquiring. For example, the Common Core of Learning performance tasks in Connecticut assume, first, that students have acquired the basic facts of science or mathematics. The actual tasks on which students were assessed required students to **do** something with the facts in their heads. These new assessments also affected the way that students interacted with each other in that often students made group presentations of what they had learned. Each person's contribution affected the performance of the whole group. Again, the effect of this assessment was that students had to employ the cooperative learning skills they were learning in class.

In many of our case study sites, school and/or district committees had invested a lot of energy in rethinking the relationships between assessment and curricula. A few of these sites had moved forward in developing statewide tests in conjunction with curriculum frameworks. In these sites where actual revamping of tests and curricula were under way, implementation of alternative assessments such as performance tasks and portfolios had begun. And in some of these cases, it was difficult to ascertain whether the curricula led to the assessment instruments or whether the assessments drove the curriculum. For example, when Connecticut first implemented its newly developed tests, students at many of the state's schools performed poorly, including students at schools with reputations for high academic achievement. Local-level staff across the state scrambled to revamp their curricula, more closely aligning them with the new tests. (They did not opt to remake the tests, showing the confidence they had in this new measure.) Teachers and principals, when interviewed, unabashedly praised the tests and defended their actions. "Teaching to the test" was clearly acceptable because the test represented the best in the curriculum; it aimed for worthy goals for students to achieve.

New Learning Experiences for Students

The central question remaining is how any of these reforms in staff roles, attitudes, curriculum, instruction, and assessment have affected students. For obvious reasons, in sites where change has not reached or focused on the classroom, we found little effect on students. However, in those many instances that we have described in this chapter where teachers are questioning their traditional approaches to instruction and learning, students are often having very different learning experiences.

Changes in Classroom Interactions

Students are more likely to be working with teachers who have higher expectations for learning. When teachers translate these beliefs into actions, students' experiences change. For example, in a Kentucky high school, teachers took the high-expectations rhetoric seriously and implemented an afternoon tutoring program targeting the lowest-performing 55 students in the school, all of whom were in jeopardy of failing. The program was a success—all students got back on track and were promoted to the next grade level. As mentioned in the preceding section on assessment, students with new curricula found that they were required to interact in a different way with the materials they received. More was required of them than filling in the blanks on a mimeographed worksheet. Newer curricula tended to emphasize the **process** for solving

problems rather than simply getting the right answer. Students were required to be more active than passive.

Block scheduling also required students to approach the curriculum in a different manner. Rather than spending 40 minutes per day on a subject before moving on to another, block scheduling reserved more time (usually about 2 hours) for students to investigate topics in greater depth. This is in concert with the Coalition of Essential Schools' philosophy that "less is more." The school experience for students becomes less fragmented if they concentrate on learning a few things well. According to teachers at some of our case study sites, block scheduling has worked well in science, where they now have time to do more than set up the lab equipment before the lesson is over. It has also worked well in language arts and reading.

Many of the changes we witnessed affected students' interactions with one another. Cooperative learning and clustering arrangements have affected the settings in which students learn and how they work with one another. The introduction of curricula emphasizing thematic or interdisciplinary teaching, manipulative mathematics, hands-on science, literature-based reading, and process writing has brought with it new classroom interactions. Students in sites implementing these types of changes could not spend the entire school day working in isolation. Especially at the elementary level, we saw students seated, not in rows with everyone facing the teacher, but in clusters of four or five. Employing cooperative learning approaches, teachers in these classrooms assigned roles to each person within the group to carry out for the completion of a task. This meant that students accustomed to either monopolizing classroom conversation or tuning out of it were both required to adjust to participating and sharing roles. School and district staff had implemented clustering at some of the high schools in our case study sample. In this arrangement, smaller groups of students shared four or five teachers. Students and teachers developed a deeper familiarity with each other than was possible in the traditional setting. The effect of this reform was to eliminate some of the anonymity that students face in the transition from junior high to high school.

Outcome-Based Education (OBE), with mastery learning as a principal component, has had the effect of changing both student achievement and student attitudes toward the curriculum. A biology teacher in one school we visited described the effect of mastery learning in her classroom, where students who did not perform well on the initial test were allowed to retake the test: "This approach gets kids to the point where they feel good about knowing material. With the retests, kids rarely go down in score; usually they jump up a full grade. I set 'mastery' at B+ (87 percent)—I just picked it. The kids were surprised, because some teachers set mastery at 80 percent. But I tell them, 'You can do it.'" At an elementary school in a different state, teachers

reported "an increased level of student engagement in the subject areas where mastery learning is in place.... Students enjoy being able to say 'I mastered _____.'"

Students have also benefited from structural changes designed to ensure a more personal or immediate approach to learners and their problems. The middle school model with its child-centered focus, schools-within-schools, and teams of teachers illustrates how schools can change to enhance their chances of meeting the needs of students. Another example is the establishment of teacher assistance teams (TATs) designed to provide expert advice and assistance to regular classroom teachers who have problem students. The TAT serves as a quick-turnaround mechanism for observing students with learning problems and recommending interventions. If a teacher is concerned about the progress of a student, the case can be referred to the TAT. At one midwestern site implementing this reform, school staff noted that the TAT has changed from a group that maintained a special education assessment waiting list to a proactive team for helping all students and teachers. The philosophy is to avoid having to send the child outside the classroom or the school to receive help. Rather than automatically refer a child elsewhere, all of a school's resources (including people such as the school psychologist, resource teachers, special education teachers) are combined to meet student needs in as undisruptive a manner as possible.

There was also some evidence that school-based reforms affected student attitudes about themselves and their schools. In one high school, teachers told stories of increased pride in the school, of students' beginning to wear the jackets and shirts with the school's emblem on them. Across this district, "real evidence" that reform is occurring in the public schools and the community's view of them manifests in the fact that "many students who used to attend Catholic and independent schools are now coming back to the public schools." A university faculty member told us, "Parents are opting for public schools. I moved my kids from private schools to public because I saw they could get a better education here."

But what evidence is there that changes in attitudes and experiences have led to better student learning? This study was not designed to assess directly the effects of reforms on students; such a study would be difficult to design and conduct. We did address this question, however, in each of the sites we visited. Unfortunately, in most of these sites, assessment issues were still in flux, with staff at many schools expressing skepticism of standardized tests but not yet wedded to more alternative forms of assessment. Moreover, not all sites had instituted a formal mechanism for assessing the success of their reforms. And in those sites that did gather pre- and posttest data, the results were often confounded by other site events, such as the reform's coinciding with the arrival of a new principal.

For example, in one small rural elementary school we visited, average student achievement test scores had increased in the range of 20 percent over the past few years. During the same time, the school had adopted an effective schools model, begun site-based management, and implemented a series of curricular reforms, including hands-on mathematics and a process approach to writing. At the same time, a new principal had come into the school, begun a successful school grounds beautification program, garnered new resources from the district, increased parent and community support, and established staff stability. Although we feel comfortable concluding that the combination of these efforts influenced the increase in student achievement, we cannot conclude that this specific set of reforms would have similar effects in another school, especially in the absence of such inspired leadership.

The Impact of Reforms on Student Equity

Finally we turn to the effects of reform on equity among students. One of the original goals of the effective schools movement was to close the achievement gap between "regular" and "at-risk" students. Has this notion gotten lost in subsequent school-based reform? Have the current reforms had any effect on student equity?

As we have alluded to a number of times in the preceding two sections, a key effect of reforms in some of our schools has been to change teachers' attitudes toward students in ways that tend to raise expectations for all students, including traditionally lower-achieving students. In these schools, these attitudinal shifts have often resulted in instructional and curricular reforms that tend to have egalitarian effects. The first of these involves increased reliance on different forms of cooperative learning, in which students are heterogeneously grouped and assigned specific tasks; thus encouraging greater participation among all students.

Second, in these schools we saw a move toward less tracking at the school level—students were not placed in classrooms on the basis of achievement levels. One aspect of this trend was increased mainstreaming of special education students. To support the placement of special education and other low-achieving students in regular classrooms, some schools had developed creative strategies. For example, one midwestern school was piloting a center within the school to serve students with special needs—about 15 percent of its student population. A cadre of special education and unassigned regular teachers provided quick-response assessment and observation to students who were struggling in the regular school program. These teachers also cooperatively taught with regular classroom teachers. The initial goal of the center was to get past student labels and to expand the cooperative learning and cooperative teaching experiments

throughout the school. A result of the pilot thus far is that the school as a whole is evolving into a pilot site for district innovations in the area of special education.

Although the general trend in schools involved in classroom-level reform was toward policies that increased equal access to challenging learning opportunities, we did come across counter examples. For instance, in one district we visited that was under intense pressure to desegregate its schools voluntarily, a number of inner-city elementary schools had set up school-within-schools for gifted students. These strategies tended to increase the enrollment of middle-class, white children, but the gifted programs tended to increase segregation within the schools. In such cases, poor and minority children were exposed to less challenging content and instruction than their white counterparts.

Summary

As we discussed in the second chapter of the report, reform in some schools meant little more than changes in how teachers and staff interacted, reflecting either the lack of ambitious or clear goals or simply the fact that the reforms were just getting under way. Regardless, in these cases, the reforms had few effects on staff and students. But in other sites, school-based reform has involved fundamental changes in the daily lives of people in schools. In these cases, reforms have offered school staff new opportunities for professional growth and have presented new demands on staff's time, skills, and knowledge.

In our best examples of school reform, teachers and administrators have both seized these opportunities and met these demands, the results being changed attitudes toward students, changed classroom practices, and new learning opportunities for students. Across these sites, there was an increased emphasis on students' acquiring skills in reasoning, higher-order thinking, and computer literacy. There was also a discernible trend toward including all students in the regular classroom format. Tracking was being eliminated in many sites in favor of whole-group instruction and cooperative learning in small groups. School staff were experimenting with or instituting various measures to mainstream special education students into the regular classroom. The fact that students previously excluded were now included in central classroom activities means that they were given the opportunity to learn challenging material for the first time.

The data from this study do not allow us to gauge accurately the effects of these practices on students. We cannot state, for example, that students in classrooms where teachers are using any particular new practice—say, hands-on, process-oriented mathematics or literature-based language arts—are learning more than their counterparts in other classrooms. However, a

growing body of literature from other research suggests that these practices have a high potential for positive effects on student learning (e.g., Means et al., 1991; Knapp et al., 1992).

We argue, then, that schools in which such practices are taking root are promising examples of school-based reform. The data from the case study sites suggest that such schools often share a set of other characteristics, which map onto the dimensions of school reform we discussed at the end of the second chapter. First, the more promising school-based reforms quickly focus on ways of changing the process of teaching and learning for **all** students (with clear implications for student equity). Although it appears obvious, if not tautological, to assert that one needs to change students' classroom experience to affect student learning, many reform efforts (as many as 20 percent nationwide) appear not to be doing so. Second, more promising reforms appear to provide teachers with opportunities to work with one another and to have a voice in decisions that directly affect their ability to improve classroom practice. Such collaborative opportunities appear to help teachers develop more professional attitudes and to assume greater ownership of reform efforts. Third, more promising reforms tend to include opportunities for teachers (and, to a lesser extent, administrators) to gain more knowledge and build their professional capacity in subject-matter areas, classroom pedagogy, and decision-making strategies.

Not surprisingly, these components of promising reform reflect many of the themes in the early effective schools research, which focused on improved achievement for all students and the active participation of teachers in improving teaching and learning. At the same time, they represent an evolution of thinking since the early effective schools research, elevating discourse beyond basic skills and focusing on the professional development teachers need to alter classroom practice and improve student learning.

In the next chapter, we turn to the question of what needs to take place at the school site to support these kinds of reform.

4 SCHOOL SITE CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT REFORM

In this chapter, we focus our attention on school-level conditions that enable (or inhibit) teachers' and administrators' efforts to pursue promising reform strategies. We argue here that in the face of the challenges associated with positive, lasting change, schools are more likely to develop the characteristics of promising reform—a focus on challenging learning for all students, opportunities for staff collaboration and ownership, and professional capacity—if all or most of the conditions described below are present at the school level in some form. In making this argument, we recognize that these conditions are typically not present as schools begin the reform process. Rather, in the most promising cases of reform, they tend to develop over time. These conditions are:

- catalytic and sustaining leadership;
- knowledge about and skills related to the change process, new instructional strategies and challenging curricula;
- ongoing assessment and sharing of information about school performance;
- facilitative and empowering governance;
- adequate resources; and
- parent and community support.

Although we discuss each of these conditions separately, they are in reality part of a complex, interrelated whole.

Providing Leadership That Catalyzes and Sustains Reform

Perhaps the single most important condition supporting meaningful school reform was the presence of effective leadership at the school level. The degree to which any improvement effort could be initiated and sustained over time turned, to a great extent, on the quality of leadership. In instances of promising improvement efforts (see Cicely Elementary in the second chapter), we generally uncovered the presence of a dynamic leader or set of leaders. Conversely, examples of stalled reform efforts (see Petersburg Elementary in the second chapter) were generally accompanied by lackluster, absent, or unclear leadership.

In this section, we examine two kinds of leadership that support reform. The first involves the catalytic leadership that is necessary to initiate the reform process, to build shared commitment, and to marshal resources in such a way that the reform process gets under way. Here, leadership, whether by the principal or someone else, projects a sense of possibility. The second kind of leadership is that needed to sustain the reform effort over time. Sustaining leadership calls for school leaders who can facilitate, motivate, and otherwise support those who are engaged in making reform initiatives actually work in practice. We found that both kinds of leadership were generally present in schools whose reforms had progressed the farthest and demonstrated the greatest promise.

Leadership as Catalyst for Change: Energizing the Reform Process

In many of the sites we visited, a dynamic and energetic individual (or group of individuals) had a catalytic role in initiating the reform process. By "catalytic," we are referring to activities that caused the staff to develop a shared vision of where the school was headed and that motivated staff to take the risks of adopting new approaches to their work.

A clear example of such catalytic reform occurred with the arrival of a new principal at what had been considered among the worst elementary school in a rural Kentucky district. As a first step toward improving the school, the principal got the grounds cleaned up and put a sign on her door reading, "Do it. Do it right. Do it right now." This activist stance was accompanied by the implementation of an effective school-based planning process and more lively faculty meetings in which the principal clearly outlined her goals for teacher conduct and student achievement. According to the teachers, these changes led to a marked increase in teacher participation in planning and the adoption of a series of new instructional approaches that matched the higher expectations of students engendered by the principal's attitude.

In the absence of the clear goals emanating from catalytic leadership, schools can flounder in the morass of reform proposals. The case of Edgemont Junior High School (see the second chapter) provides such an example. This school was subjected to a barrage of new initiatives from the district office. Because the principal had been unsuccessful in clarifying the message about the school's direction, the staff became very frustrated. As a consequence, little changed in this school.

Catalytic leadership also involved the creation of a climate of trust and partnership that engendered risk-taking behavior. For example, we visited a school where teachers described a new principal as "someone who had created an environment where teachers were able to express

their opinions and then know they make a difference." A key strategy that leaders used to develop such trust was to establish a climate that rewards collegiality and creativity.

For example, we visited a junior high school in Connecticut in which a principal took active steps to get the reform process moving by promoting staff collegiality. On coming to the school, he decided that the best method of creating long-term solutions to low student achievement was to increase staff ownership of the reform process. He immediately increased the involvement of the staff in decision making, and allowed others to fill leadership roles. The result was an increase in teachers' willingness to take chances and explore new instructional strategies.

By virtue of his or her position, the principal is typically the individual in the school who takes on the catalytic role. Moreover, we studied a number of schools in which the principal was hired explicitly to serve in this role. Typically, such hiring occurred in extremely poorly performing schools that district staff viewed as needing a savior. Yet we had a number of examples in which other staff served in the leadership role. Cicely Elementary (described in the second chapter) is an example of a school in which a group of teachers have clearly been the catalyst. In another site, a small group of teachers joined with an active assistant superintendent to devise an end run around the principal. Here, the strategy was successful and significant reforms have taken place, in spite of an inactive principal.

It is not easy for a principal (or anyone else) to catalyze the reform process. Yet, in the absence of someone or some group to serve as the promoter of change, it is difficult for staff to develop a common understanding and to adopt a common direction.

Leadership That Nurtures Staff and Facilitates Ownership to Sustain Reform at the School Level

The skills needed to catalyze school-based reforms are different from those needed to sustain those reforms over time. Whereas the former involve creating conditions that promote change in the direction of the school, the latter involve creating conditions that nurture the staff and facilitate a shared ownership to sustain the reforms.

The strategies for nurturing staff that we observed were as simple and straightforward as helping to establish a staff lounge, increasing teacher-teacher communication, and promoting cross-visiting of classrooms. The goal in these schools was to create an environment in which teachers felt valued, so that, as one teacher put it, "you are able to express your opinion and they make a difference." Thus, the nurturance needed to sustain reform went beyond making teachers feel good. It included efforts to create and maintain a sense of shared ownership of the reform.

Creating a sense of shared ownership generally involved engaging in activities that helped staff gain a voice in determining the direction of the school. Such involvement did not always translate into teacher control. The key to sustaining reform seemed to be the inclusion of school staff in discussions about key school-level issues and the provision to staff of more authority for what took place in their own classrooms, as we discuss later in this chapter.

Another key component of leadership that sustains reform is the provision of sufficient opportunities for school staff to develop the knowledge they need to make change work. For example, a central factor sustaining reform at Cicely was the ability of the principal to support continued staff development for teachers outside the original group that had initiated the reform efforts. We discuss this issue in greater detail in the next section of the chapter.

The difference between catalytic and sustaining leadership was exemplified in a Washington State elementary school we visited. Here, a dynamic principal came to the school in the mid-1980s and, driven by what some teachers described as "moral outrage," set upon a course to improve the school. The principal galvanized the staff around the issue of low student test scores. Together the principal and the staff were continually trying different strategies and approaches, and the school was in a constant state of flux. Finally, a course of reform was decided on and a plan of action devised—at which point the principal left.

The subsequent principal, with a very different leadership style, took over the implementation of the reform program. The second principal took a much lower-key approach to change. She made fewer demands on staff time and generally went out of her way to attend to the needs of the staff. Her commitment to the program was high, but she worked hard to create a climate in which everyone could accomplish the school's vision with less stress. Staff, even those who were on board when the first principal provided the initial "catalyzing" leadership that led to the reforms, acknowledge that the present principal has brought much-needed stability to the school.

A second example shows how reform can falter in the absence of such sustaining leadership. In this case, the principal of a racially diverse small-town high school arrived 7 years ago with a clear agenda based on the simple principle that every student could be successful. According to all the teachers with whom we spoke, the principal succeeded in getting teachers to support his goals. To a person, they acknowledged that many of the improvements in the school resulted from the principal's unwavering vision and his unwillingness to compromise his beliefs. However, the principal's "can do" attitude, which worked well when it came to catalyzing the staff to initiate

changes, appears to be somewhat of an impediment as the staff seeks a larger role in determining the future direction of the school.

Developing Knowledge and Skills in Process and Pedagogy

The presence of capable leadership can go only so far to sustain reform efforts. The long-term improvement of a school depends on the ability of all (or most) school staff to improve their own work. Such change generally requires staff to learn new ways of interacting with one another and with students. Support for staff to develop the skills and acquire the knowledge necessary to make these changes is a key condition we found common to schools moving ahead with their reform agendas.

The importance of such support increases in relationship to the magnitude of the reform effort and the existing knowledge and skills of the staff. For instance, in one big-city elementary school, reforms involved major changes in classroom activities: whole language, process writing, assertive discipline, and multicultural awareness. Teachers noted that staff development had been a major vehicle for helping them to make these changes. In other schools, the careful selection of teachers by a strong leader over a number of years had established a cadre of highly trained individuals who were relatively ready to take on the challenges involved in new reform efforts.

In discussing the development of new knowledge and skills in schools undergoing reforms, we differentiate between efforts focusing on the process of change and those targeted on teaching and curriculum.

Knowledge About the Process of Change

In schools that had progressed farthest toward reform goals, teachers typically demonstrated a high level of skill in the areas of communication, problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution. Knowledge and skills in these areas contributed substantially to the development of a professional collegiality that enhanced the school's capacity to change.

Specific knowledge and skills about the process of change were not a precondition for the initiation of school-based reform in the schools we studied. Yet if staff did not develop such skills in the reform's early stages, it was difficult for them to develop a high degree of collegiality and to engage in collaborative work.

An elementary school in an agricultural community illustrates how building the staff's abilities to work together, solve problems, and make decisions provided the foundation for

change. Two years ago, the staff went through training in shared decision making that resulted in the teachers' assuming responsibility for making all the decisions that affect them. Not only did they make all the decisions about curriculum and instruction, they also hired the teachers. When staff meetings were held, grade-level teams rather than an administrator took responsibility for running the meeting, and staff members, including the principals, had to sign up to speak. One teacher commented that the meetings were run very efficiently and if speakers went beyond the time allotted to them, a buzzer went off and they had to stop. Despite the use of a buzzer to control time, several staff members stated that meetings were enjoyable and productive.

We found that certain reform models—the "effective schools" improvement model and "Outcome-Based Education"—often emphasized team training and the establishment of school councils that helped school staff put these process skills to work in a practical, productive manner. An example was noted in an urban elementary school where, after 3 years of involvement in an effective schools process, a new principal implemented a participatory management team. The principal has been at this school for 5 years now, and comments by the teachers included statements such as, "There's a lot of teamwork here...everybody comes through. Teachers come with a shared responsibility to see students achieve." In assessing the success of this school, most teachers believe that the effective schools reform coupled **with** the decision-making team is working. One teacher commented, "I've been in other schools that were supposed to be effective. They weren't, but this school is."

Whether or not experience with the change process is linked to a structured-change reform model, the presence of skills that enhance staff members' ability to work together productively is important. School staff who do not possess or acquire these skills often experience high levels of frustration. An example of the problems that can arise was documented in an urban elementary school. The new principal brought an approach that featured shared decision making among the staff, an active outreach effort to the community, creation of a site council with community members on it, and a philosophy of leadership that placed decision making squarely in teachers' and the site council's hands. This approach bore several forms of fruit: teacher participation once again in school affairs and active participation in the decision-making process, renewed community confidence in the school, and frustration by many with the inability of the decision-making process to reach closure on key issues. Yet many teachers in the school have not bought into the shared decision-making process. Some staff fault the principal for abdicating a leadership role and handing over too much authority to teachers. Others believe he has assumed a facilitative posture necessary to bring about true shared decision making. At present, the faculty is divided into two warring camps—in one teacher's words, "the traditionalists versus the

visionaries"—each taking sides over the general issue of how fast and how far-reaching changes in the schedule, grade configuration, and curricular approach should be. No resolution is yet in sight.

Knowledge of Curriculum and Pedagogy

To sustain school-based reform that improves classroom practice, school staffs need to enhance and improve what takes place in the classroom. We found that making the kind of changes associated with the adoption of real-world-based, critical-thinking-oriented curricula discussed in Chapter 3 required teachers to acquire skills that were quite different from those learned in their original training.

In schools that had developed the most promising school reforms, significant attention had been given to ensuring that teachers had access to the knowledge required to make these changes. A case in point was an elementary school in a suburban Midwest school district that served a predominantly lower-middle-class white student population. Even though the school served one of the district's poorest neighborhoods, student achievement was among the highest in the district. The school had achieved this success over several years by helping teachers become proficient in a series of curricular innovations, including cooperative learning, mastery learning, peer tutoring, and the implementation of after-school and Saturday math and science clubs for students in grades 4-8. Cicely Elementary provides another example—here school reform revolved around the gradual adoption of new and more challenging curricula as a result of participation in ongoing staff development activities.

Other schools with a less defined reform agenda promoted growth in the areas of curriculum and instruction by using staff development to plant seeds. They did this by encouraging individual staff members to seek out and pursue any innovation in curriculum and instruction they desired as long as it would benefit students in some demonstrable way.

Assessing and Sharing Information About School Performance

The schools in which school-based reforms were most fully established demonstrated a commitment to seek out and analyze information that helped them track their progress in relation to their goals. The nature of the data schools reviewed varied widely but typically included information about student progress and about stakeholders' perceptions of how well the school was doing. Such information enabled staff to engage in an informed discussion about their progress and about what was needed to continue the process of improvement.

We visited a rural Kentucky elementary school that illustrates the effective ways such data gathering can be useful in a reform effort. Here, a school team conducted a series of surveys of staff and parents and then spent a great deal of time reviewing student achievement. As a result, staff focused their efforts on reducing the disparities in student achievement across the school while working to change both students' and teachers' attitudes about students' abilities. Over the past 2 years, the staff have closely monitored their progress through repeated surveys and student testing—and altered their reform efforts accordingly. The efforts have begun to show signs of succeeding, as overall student performance has increased while much higher percentages of girls and low-income students are scoring above the 50th percentile.

As we discussed in the preceding chapter, the quality of student achievement data was questioned by teachers in many of our schools. Most schools relied on standardized assessment instruments provided by the state, which many teachers argued did not measure students' knowledge of what was being taught. This disjuncture between assessment, instruction, and curricula created problems throughout our sample, as teachers felt as though there were no adequate instruments to assess their progress.

Overcoming these difficulties was a challenge few schools were equipped to meet. In one school we visited, staff developed their own assessment strategies. The staff met collectively to review a whole set of information—both quantitative and qualitative—about student performance in reading and mathematics. On the basis of their deliberations, each child was assigned to a particular teacher and group that best met his or her needs. Although such an assessment process allowed teachers to go beyond a review of standardized testing results, it was also extremely time consuming.

Regardless of the type of assessment program that a school used, it was clear that an important condition for success was a school's clear commitment to collect, share, and use information about school performance. It should be noted that schools that used this type of information most productively used it as a way of establishing a shared understanding of the school's performance—not the performance of individual teachers.

Setting Up Governance Structures That Empower School Staff

As we explained in the discussion on leadership, sustaining reform in a school depended in part on the staff's ownership of the changes. In turn, ownership revolved around the degree to which the staff had a meaningful role in determining what the reforms would be. In the most promising examples of reform, schools had established a structure and process for involving staff

in the decision-making process—such that teachers believed they could raise any issue for consideration.

The involvement of teachers in decisions was a key factor in empowering teachers and ultimately sustaining reform efforts. Yet working out ways to profitably involve teachers in the decision-making process was generally not easy. In one school we visited, the staff chose to cut their teeth in the risky venture of schoolwide decision making by first addressing nonacademic issues to build their confidence in expressing ideas with colleagues. As their skills in working collegially increased, the staff moved on to raising more difficult questions about their roles in promoting and preventing student failure.

Beyond possessing the capacity to question the school's daily operations, empowerment also involved the authority and responsibility to make key decisions. In most schools, the principal clearly was the primary decision maker, but at other sites this role was more decentralized or unclear. An elementary school in the Pacific Northwest illustrates this point. The principal, clearly perceived as the leader by school staff, saw his own role as primarily facilitative. In his view, he planted seeds about what he would like to see done but encouraged the ideas of others. In essence, he actually provides a great deal of direction, but he does so in such a way that the staff feel they are choosing the direction. The principal says that he maintains veto power but rarely uses it because "they make good decisions."

Teacher involvement in decision making appeared to work most effectively when the decisions were tied most directly to the quality of the school's curriculum and instructional program. In such cases, teachers were generally more willing to invest time and energy in shared decision making. A clear example of the importance of this connection between the governance structure and teaching and learning was provided by a suburban high school, in which the district was very committed to the classic "effective schools" model. Two-thirds of the teachers at this high school actively participated in either the effective schools council or one of the correlate committees. These new governance structures were working quite well—in large part because of a concurrent reform that opened up communication between the administration and teaching staff. There were eight classroom observations per year, which have served to focus the entire school on improving instructional performance. The committees targeted their work on the substantive areas of instruction and content, and both strategies, taken together, kept teachers involved and interested.

The commitment to shared decision making often varied with the principal's views about its importance. Some principals provided significant opportunities for staff by involving them in

decision making—particularly decisions involving curriculum and pedagogy. For example, we visited an urban elementary school in which staff noted that the principal had "given us the opportunity to do things; it is not 'my way or no way' with her." Another teacher stated, "[She] is good at involving teachers in decision making. She doesn't have to go out and recruit people; they volunteer." No efforts were made to monitor uniform participation or mandate attendance. As one teacher expressed it, "Serving on committees is not a burden. It is almost a privilege."

At the other extreme, we visited schools in which there has been little real change in teachers' ability to participate in the life of the school. For example, one elementary school staff we visited had received some training and formed an effective schools council that held regular meetings with the principal to develop a set of school reforms. The formation of the council made it appear that the staff had substantially greater opportunities to provide input about the direction of the school; in reality, the principal simply vetoed any decision emanating from the council.

Making Adequate Resources Available

Schools trying to put new reforms in place often needed some additional resources—time for teachers to plan, access to staff development opportunities, and new materials. Generally, these resources could be obtained through increased funds—and, in fact, many of the schools we visited that had moved far in putting reforms in place had access to additional money. However, we found no one-to-one relationship between additional funding and schools' ability to progress with reforms..

A number of the case study schools were involved in state-funded programs that provided them with substantial supplementary resources; for example, in Washington State, the Schools for the 21st Century program provided both additional funding and release time for teachers. More typically, schools received relatively small grants as part of some state or local reform effort. And in many cases, no extra funds were available to schools at all.

A few of the case study schools received outside funds from private sources. One example was a California elementary school that received a 3-year grant for $250,000. The money was used to provide 3 days of training during the summer for the entire staff. The focus of the training was leadership, consensus building, and developing a renewed vision of the school.

The need for funds to support staff time to plan reforms was especially crucial. In the absence of extra resources, staff had to struggle to find the needed time. For example, in one junior high school attempting to implement several reforms, the staff met regularly in a variety of planning configurations (grade-level teams, subject-area teams, etc.). Despite the district efforts

to provide additional resources, a major problem they confronted was the lack of time to meet outside of the regular school day. "We are meeting all the time. We have got to be careful the school doesn't become just a place to hold meetings as opposed to a place to educate children."

Because the resources that are available are so limited, it is extremely important that they are used wisely. One example of how a district got more money into the hands of the school was the decision that, rather than "bring in high-priced people for one shot," the resources were allocated to the school to support "home-grown" programs of staff development.

There is little question that most schools need additional resources if school reform is to be successful. However, the mere presence of additional resources did not ensure that reform occurred. Increased resources were of value primarily when used to help a school implement a clearly defined reform agenda. The schools that had made the greatest progress in implementing school-based reform typically had higher levels of resources than surrounding schools; however, those resources were used in a focused way to assist the school in providing training, creating conditions conducive to change, or purchasing supplies and materials that enabled the school to implement the programs it had designed.

Developing Parental and Community Support

In many of the schools that had been able to sustain school-based reform, there was evidence that efforts were under way to actively involve the parents and the community. This involvement manifested itself in a variety of ways. At some sites, these stakeholders participated directly in the governance of the school. A high school in the Southeast instituted major changes in the governance structure of the school, including: (1) a design team that included local university staff, business and community leaders, teachers, and parents charged with redesigning both the junior high and high school program, and (2) school-based decision-making teams composed of teachers, parents, classified staff, and the principal that have final decision-making authority at the school.

More often, parents played a more limited role in school governance but were substantially involved in the school in other kinds of ways. One elementary school was able to increase parental involvement not only by addressing the needs of students, but also by serving as a resource to the parents themselves. As the principal put it, "Informally, we've let parents know if they come to us, they can get help." Courses and services in resume writing, what to do and not to do during an interview, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation have been offered at the school. "We're positive about parents getting their GED [high school equivalency], going to college.

[We have] a real focus on getting the parents' acts together because they're so young.... We spend a lot of time with parents." This school developed extensive programs to enhance home-school communication, designed a homework booklet to enable parents to help their children with homework, and developed a partnership with a senior citizens' home in which the residents attend art and music classes, sometimes teaching the children skills such as cooking and knitting.

Despite a school's commitment, sites serving predominantly low-income and/or minority parents acknowledged difficulties in obtaining parent/community involvement. One school's efforts to address the specific needs of parents in these communities were demonstrated in an urban elementary school that provided a neighborhood care program from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for working parents and ran a breakfast program. The staff held PTA meetings on two nights to accommodate the number of parents, and they emphasized casual attire so that parents did not feel they had to dress up. The strategies and innovations this school has developed to respond to the needs of its parents provide a clear example of how some schools have come to view parents as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem. It also reflects an understanding that parents' lack of involvement was not always due to their lack of interest.

High School Reform: What Gets in the Way?

Are the conditions needed to support school-based reform different at the elementary and secondary levels? We do not believe so. However, the case study data do suggest that a series of factors make it more difficult to move forward with reform efforts at the high school level. These are (1) the size and span of control, (2) schools' subject-matter orientation, and (3) confusion about the school mission.

First, high schools must deal with their size and the span-of-control problems that result. High schools are loosely coupled organizationally. In elementary schools, there is usually no one formally between the principal and the classroom teacher, whereas high schools have assistant principals, counselors, and a formal departmental structure. These additional positions add layers of bureaucracy that impede communication and slow the process of reform. Span-of-control issues often limit the ability of school leaders to provide either catalytic or sustaining leadership.

A second factor inhibiting reform at the secondary level is the adherence to a content-driven school organization. Whereas many of the elementary and even middle-level schools that we observed were integrating subject areas, high school teachers appeared to have more difficulty breaking down traditional subject-matter barriers.

Finally, a related factor impeding change in high schools comes from the lack of a clear vision of the school mission. In elementary schools, there is little doubt that the central purpose is to educate students so that they can read, write, spell, compute, etc. In high schools, this clarity of purpose seldom exists. Is it the purpose of high school to prepare students for college, for the world of work, or both? Should high schools accept responsibility for educating the whole child or should it be more limited than that? What are the school's responsibilities to parents and the community? Who is the client? There are no easy answers to any of these questions, and, all too often, rather than wrestle with them at all, high schools have tried to be all things to all people—with mixed success.

The conditions that enhance school reform are no different in high schools than they are in elementary schools. However, some unique factors that exist in high schools make reform much more problematic.

Summary

Earlier in this document, we concluded that promising reform efforts are characterized by a central focus on creating more challenging learning experiences for all students, collaborative staff participation in the whole life of the school, and access to needed professional knowledge (see Chapter 3). Here, we have focused on the school-level conditions that support the presence of such factors.

We conclude that leadership has two key roles in improving schools: getting reform off the ground and helping to create the conditions necessary to sustain it. Effective leadership can set the tone of reform, create the sense of possibility of success, facilitate organizational restructuring, and marshal the necessary political and financial resources. Although leadership is generally the province of the principal, we found examples of schools led by groups of activist teachers.

The continued development of change efforts, however, depends on much more than leadership, as all (or most) of the staff has to become involved in moving the school forward. To support this progress, we learned that school staff typically need a significant amount of new knowledge about the process of change. Schools involved in promising reform efforts generally have made conscious efforts to help staff acquire the skills needed to work collaboratively to define reform goals and to devise plans to meet these goals. Moreover, in such schools staff typically have opportunities for real participation and input (although not necessarily authority) in decisions about the progress of reform.

In a parallel fashion, in schools in which teachers successfully focus on classroom-level reforms, access is provided to new knowledge about the progress of their students and about new ways of teaching and learning. Such access is especially crucial as teachers attempt to adopt more real-world-based, critical-thinking-oriented instruction and curricula that challenge students to a much greater degree.

Schools' progress toward reform is generally facilitated by access to outside resources—especially funds that can be used to provide teacher release time or to buy materials needed to adopt new curricula. In the absence of well-thought-out plans to improve the school, however, funds make little difference. Finally, we found that support from parents and the community can play a role in facilitating reform.

In the schools that we studied, each of these factors—leadership, access to knowledge, opportunities for staff input in decision making, external resources, and outside support—was important in its own right. In reality, however, they worked as part of a complex whole to support the progress of reform. The existence of catalyzing leadership cannot guarantee that school-based reform will succeed. Likewise, decentralizing decision making does little to ensure that reform will occur if the decisions are not driven by a commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Finally, we recognize that the development of school-level conditions that support change depends, in large part, on the circumstances that exist outside the school. In the next chapter, we turn to the role of the district office in affecting schools' capacity to engage in school-based reform.

5 DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

School-based reform does not happen in a vacuum: the district—including the central office of the local educational agency (LEA) and other aspects of the district setting—provides an important context for the story of reform at the school level. Taken together, the central office and the district setting offer varying degrees of support for reforms undertaken by school people. This chapter explores the different forms of district support that were associated with the school-based reforms we studied.

At the outset, we recognize that "district" has a different meaning in small and large LEAs. In the smallest LEAs (e.g., those with only two or three schools), the school and district levels tend to blur for many, if not most, functions. In such instances, the superintendent, whose central office staff may consist of one or two clerical assistants, does a little bit of everything but must of necessity delegate many district-level functions to school people. Principals, for example, may act as district coordinators for special programs, staff development, or particular curriculum areas. Here, district support for school-based reform may be largely a story of school people helping each other. At the central office in larger districts, on the other hand, different departments and two or more levels of staff positions are found. In such instances there are more distinct organizational units that may offer support, but also more to coordinate with each other and with the reform effort and, inevitably, more that could stand in the way of school-based reform. Thus, in larger districts, the school and district levels tend to be more differentiated and often more isolated from one another. Although this complexity has the potential to stand in the way of reform, it may also enrich school-based reform efforts.

We also recognize that district support for school-based reform may not be uniform across the district. In other words, the central office may treat schools differently, such that one enjoys a warm and helpful relationship with the central office staff while others equally engaged in reform activities encounter hostility or indifference. These differences in treatment may be subtle matters of tone and relationship, or they may extend to concrete and immediate matters such as the school's budget for the coming year, how many teaching positions are available, or what resources would be made available for professional development.

We present our analyses of district support first by describing four basic patterns of support that emerged from our data, followed by a discussion of locus of authority issues, which pervade all attempts at school reform in which school-level people take at least some of the initiative.

Next, we examine what district actors do that creates conditions facilitating (or inhibiting) school-based reform. Finally, we discuss the implications of these actions for change at the district level itself.

Patterns of District Support for School-Based Reforms

Several broad patterns can be discerned in the ways districts provide support for school-based reform. The patterns reflect different resolutions of basic questions about governance, authority, leadership, etc. Each pattern can work for or against reform at the school level, depending on the fit between what the district does and what the school is trying to accomplish. The existence of different support patterns suggests that there is more than one viable way to provide support for reform.

We found four types of district support at work in our sample. In the first two patterns, which we label "Vision at the Top" and "Behind-the-Scenes Support," district-level staff have clear visions of reform goals for the schools, although with differing ideas about how to realize them at the school level. In the third and fourth patterns, which we label "Conduit for External Reform Ideas" and "Laissez-Faire Support," the district does not hold or project a clear sense of where school reform should be headed, but instead transmits the reform ideas of outside groups or else permits school people to find their own path.

We describe each type below, with examples from our case reports, but note at the outset that the patterns are not mutually exclusive. Although most of the districts we studied typify one of the four patterns, several exhibit two or even three patterns simultaneously.

Vision at the Top

In perhaps the most obvious pattern of district support, a number of cases in our sample are characterized by strong visionary leadership at the district level guiding school-based reform. In such instances, key individuals at the central office—often the superintendent or assistant superintendent, but sometimes a director of staff development or of elementary or secondary education—provide the initial catalyst, as well as ongoing intellectual and operational leadership, for the efforts of school people to reform their schools. Consider the following example:

> **Bringing the Blueprint for Change: The Superintendent as Effective Schools Guru in South Mission Unified School District.** In this medium-sized suburban district, the superintendent brought to his position strong convictions and a degree of experience with the "effective schools" process.

One of his initial actions was to have all central office administrators and board members trained in this process. Subsequently, the process and ideas about mastery learning were introduced to all schools, and school staffs were extensively exposed to the seven correlates of effective schooling espoused by this vision. School councils and correlate committees were promptly formed and have remained in place over the past 4 years. The superintendent and district staff maintain an active presence in each school through continuing refresher training and requirements that keep schools focused on instructional leadership (e.g., the requirement that principals observe each teacher eight times a year).

There is remarkable consistency across schools in sense of mission and the approach to realizing it at the school level. As we discussed in the second chapter, at South Mission High, the school staff has engaged in active problem solving through its effective schools committee structure, to address various issues ranging from safety to tracking. The principal is a committed instructional leader, as called for by the effective schools process, and enjoys a close relationship with the district as a result.

Willow Place Elementary School is no less involved in the effective schools process and mastery learning. There, the principal who took over at the time of the superintendent's push for effective schools, was immediately at home with this philosophy. Correlate committees were quickly set up and have been maintained until the present, as staff have confronted the problems associated with an increasingly diverse student population, many of whom have limited English proficiency.

School people apparently feel considerable ownership of both the process and the implementation steps they have devised. The improved test scores, despite the increasing diversity of the student population, appear to bear out the value of their efforts.

There are different ways that a Vision at the Top pattern can manifest itself. For one thing, the vision need not be largely the superintendent's, although such a person is in a good position to articulate and "push" an overarching reform philosophy and program. Furthermore, the vision may or may not move schools toward a uniform approach to reform. In South Mission Unified School District, the schools we studied resembled each other a great deal, following well-established steps in the effective schools process.

By contrast, the schools in another large urban district in the same state engaged in a variety of reform efforts that departed from one another considerably, with each searching for its own way to realize the reform principles set forth in the district plan. In this district, the impetus for school-level reform came from a district task force (in which the superintendent was an active participant), which created a sweeping reform plan aimed at all facets of the district's educational program and organization. Among its many provisions, the plan promoted a new relationship between community and schools, a "common core" curriculum, the restructuring of all schools (especially at the middle school level), a waiver process to enhance school flexibility, and a new collective bargaining agreement focused on educational change. Large numbers of schools volunteered to participate initially, and the numbers have grown, although still fewer than a quarter of the schools in the district are actively engaged in restructuring. But those that are so engaged do so with a wide range of supports coming from the district level, which has set the tone for the variety of reforms under way in schools.

District support in the Vision at the Top mode appears to further the course of reform at the school level when school leaders are willing to take the district's lead or are embarked on a school-based reform process that mirrors the district's vision. For obvious reasons, this pattern is less supportive when school and district have strong but competing visions of reform (or in large and complex districts where competing visions exist in the central office).

Behind-the-Scenes Support

District office staff may provide a more hidden yet still active leadership for school-based reform, which does not involve visible or forceful advocacy. In some districts we studied, the district leaders do not possess or articulate a strong view of reform, but prefer instead to "plant seeds" for reform and facilitate individual schools' efforts to develop and implement a school-based reform initiative. In districts exemplifying this pattern, the leadership typically places great importance on school staffs' generating reform plans in which they have a high degree of ownership. In such instances, ownership, rather than particular programmatic aims or organizational arrangements, seems to be viewed as the *sine qua non* for school-based reform. The district's role is then to encourage reform efforts actively, for example, by providing a variety of staff development resources or by giving schools flexibility to embark on activities at odds with current district, state, or federal requirements. The following example illustrates one way this pattern manifests itself:

Planting Reform Seeds: Exposing North Fork City District to Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Ideas. In this district, the superintendent, assistant

superintendent, and director of secondary education began arranging a series of voluntary professional development experiences related in some fashion to Outcome-Based Education thinking. Inspirational speakers, visitations, and workshops proceeded over several years to spread enthusiasm among staff in several of the district schools. School staff were given encouragement and help in preparing grant proposals that incorporated OBE thinking (or other reform notions) into a reform program that made sense to each school.

Schools participated in very different ways. Lewis & Clark Middle School, for example, became immediately and deeply involved in OBE philosophy and thinking. Teachers from Lewis & Clark became members of a districtwide OBE task force, received extra training in OBE philosophy and techniques, and were soon offering workshops on their own to their own school staffs and to others. With the blessing of the district administrators, the entire Lewis & Clark School staff committed itself to revamping its program to reflect OBE thinking. Other middle schools adopted a wait-and-see attitude or engaged in programmatic tinkering on a more modest scale.

Shady Grove Elementary School, on the other hand, charted a more independent course, which drew on OBE ideas only indirectly. Instead, staff devised a plan featuring emotional and physical wellness, academic improvement, and the use of educational technology. The plan coalesced in a successful proposal to a state grants program designed to encourage school-level reform solutions (the proposal was written initially without the support of the district office, which eventually acquiesced). In the 4 years of the grant award, school staff have implemented much of the original plan and are now focusing more heavily on ways to translate improved school climate into better student performance.

Although it provided professional development resources and quiet support, the district refrained from taking any policy positions or articulating any reform directions (e.g., in district mission statements or the equivalent) before or after the school-based efforts got under way in several pilot schools; only recently has the board begun to focus on the reforms. Last fall, the board developed its own vision statement, which mirrors much of what is emerging in the pilot schools.

Districts can exert more control over school reform directions than North Fork administrators chose to, while still maintaining a facilitative, nondirective stance. In one moderate-sized suburban district, the central office facilitated school-based efforts by

systematically exposing school people to a menu of approaches to school improvement. Simultaneously, the district set in motion a process of establishing district curricular goals and revamping the way special education was configured. School people were encouraged to pick from the "menu" of reform ideas those they felt most comfortable with and to pursue them in some schoolwide process that made sense to the staff of each school. While giving schools wide latitude to devise reform programs tailored to their own needs, the district still retained strong control over curricular directions and took steps to ensure that schools did not try to change too many things at once, thus protecting the schools from "innovation overload."

The Behind-the-Scenes Support pattern appears to further reform efforts when there are strong leaders and receptive staffs at the school level. In other words, school people must be ready to seize the opportunity afforded by a menu of reform ideas or the heavy exposure to a particular strain of reform thinking. Without this kind of capability at the school level, district efforts to provide behind-the-scenes support may come to naught.

Conduit for External Reform Ideas

In some districts within our sample, district leaders had a less clear picture of the kinds of reform they would like to see in their schools, but they found themselves in an environment that pushed them in certain directions. Most typically, the push came from the state (for example, Kentucky's comprehensive reform program touched many aspects of school operations and featured school-based approaches to reform). But other groups external to the school district could also be a locus for reform pressure, notably the community. Typically, in such instances, the district accepts the vision from the outside and seeks to implement it by passing along requirements and resources, often interpreting or adapting them in the process. The most obvious cases occurred in instances where the state took an active role in promoting school-level reforms, as in the following example:

> **Responding to SEA Changes at the State Level: Alexander County School District Copes with a State Reform Act.** Although district leaders had made some attempt before the state reform act to change what was taught (for example, an attempt to introduce whole-language approaches to literacy instruction), they set in motion a wide-ranging set of reforms after the passage of the state reform act. Simultaneously, they made use of resources and assistance from a separate state program that offered training in the effective schools process. Given the existence of these programs, the district took the position of encouraging schools to adopt the components of the reform

act and to put in place a school-based decision-making process (as called for by the reform act and as advocated, in a different way, by effective schools thinking).

To help schools implement these reforms, the district mounted a massive staff development effort featuring a trainer-of-trainers model in which local school staff were groomed to provide continuing assistance to others in the district. The state programs provided the philosophical structure and programmatic components of the reform. The district provided technical, financial, and philosophical support for the reform effort.

However, much of the impetus for reform occurred at the school level. In Meadow Elementary School, for example, once considered the least desirable school in the district, an energetic principal with a can-do attitude persuaded her staff to see whether they could make the new state-mandated reform provisions work for them. In relatively short order, she and the school managed to change the academic program, the performance level of the students, and the school's image in the county.

Alexander County High School, however, was less affected by state reform provisions (which aimed more directly at lower grade levels), and staff at the school were less inclined to adopt the philosophical premises underlying them. As of the time of our visit, the school had put in place an effective schools structure, but had made little headway in using this to address its programmatic or organizational needs.

The state need not be the source of external pressure for reform. For example, a district in a different state was confronted by a reform movement originating in a community consortium that had developed a 10-year plan for dealing with the school dropout problem (although the school district had been included in the consortium, it had not exercised much leadership in it). Like Alexander County, the district lent philosophical support and—to a lesser degree—provided technical assistance to the implementation of the consortium's program. This consortium's activities were a large reason that the community as a whole became anointed as part of the federal government's AMERICA 2000 initiative. Although it did not start any of these initiatives, the district was instrumental in getting one of its elementary schools identified as a showcase AMERICA 2000 school and is currently reorganizing to incorporate into district operations many elements of the dropout prevention effort.

In some respects, this pattern can be interpreted as an attempt by district leaders to make a virtue out of necessity. Comprehensive state educational reforms are hard to ignore, especially when funding and accountability measures are attached. Similarly, community-based consortia

that combine most of the power centers in a community and focus efforts on a school-related problem represent a force that must be acknowledged and in some way reckoned with. The districts in question need not have cooperated with these reform efforts; however, it was their judgment in these instances that the greater good for the schools lay in conveying to the schools the reform thrust originating outside district boundaries.

For reasons that are probably obvious, the compatibility of the external reform visions with that of educators at the school level determines whether district support efforts facilitate or stand in the way of school-based efforts. In the latter example, the two schools we visited illustrated the different ways district support may be perceived or experienced by the schools. The AMERICA 2000 school was philosophically in tune with much that the community-wide effort stood for and thereby benefited from the district's support for its efforts. The other school was paying attention to an entirely different set of priorities, stimulated by a state compliance review of its special education programs. Consequently, its reform program embarked on a different course involving a creative "learning center" approach to dealing with children with special needs that was largely unrelated to district or community efforts.

Laissez-Faire Support

A fourth pattern of district support came about through district-level inattention to reform issues, or a permissive philosophy that encouraged school-level initiatives of all kinds, or even a combination of the two. Here, consciously or otherwise, the district leaders chose not to take a position on, or to provide active support for, school-based reform. Simultaneously, by design or default, they stayed out of the way of those at the school level who wished to engage in reform activity. In this situation, the district gives explicit or implicit permission to schools to go their own way. One district we visited exemplified this pattern in several different respects:

> **Letting a Thousand Flowers Bloom: Restructuring Experiments in the Central City School District.** In this large urban district, administration of district-level functions had been substantially decentralized and reduced when a subdistrict arrangement was put in place 4 years ago. Around that time, in part reflecting the vacuum of leadership at the top, a number of school-based restructuring efforts began to appear. Some grew spontaneously as entrepreneurial principals secured external funding and implemented their own visions of improved schooling.
>
> Hillcreek Elementary school was one such case. It successfully obtained long-term funding from a state grants program and additional funding from a private foundation to

develop a school-based program that eliminated labeling of children for special services, radically reduced class size for basic areas of instruction, and created a thematically unified curriculum. The school's reform effort encountered periodic resistance from advocacy groups (and ultimately from the district itself). Despite a change of principals in the middle of the reform process, the school has stuck to its changes and has improved test scores to show for its efforts.

Other school-based restructuring attempts were stimulated by district actions that, in effect, invited schools to experiment with a range of reform ideas. The decision of one subdistrict superintendent to participate in the same state grants program that had funded Hillcreek encouraged a variety of modest school-based reform experiments. The nearly two dozen schools in this subdistrict joined, some more willingly than others, but all discovered shortly that neither the district nor the state had the vaguest idea of what the schools were to do. In varying degrees, they developed reform plans and set about changing some or many aspects of what they were attempting to do.

One such school, Somerset Elementary School, evolved a many-faceted reform effort over a 4-year period, and has achieved partial success in some of its goals. The school successfully regained the confidence of the community (after a 5-year hiatus under a "disastrous" former principal), introduced educational technology into many aspects of the school curriculum, experimented with a team organization at one grade level, and engaged teachers in a decision-making process in which they have ultimate responsibility for setting school direction. This process has generated considerable debate, as yet unresolved at the time of our visit, regarding the principal's role and key issues of school organization for the future—in particular, whether the school should shift to a multigrade organization.

Over time, the district has begun to recentralize and reorganize and has taken more notice of the reform efforts under way, as well as encouraging others. At present, a variety of reform experiments are in full bloom at the school level. Whether the district will continue to "let a thousand flowers bloom" or will attempt to set directions for the school-level efforts remains to be seen.

This Laissez-Faire pattern of district support facilitates school-based reform, provided school people have clear and compelling ideas about what they want to do, the district doesn't get in their way, and at critical junctures the district can provide key resources to get the ideas

implemented. The Central City case illustrates both the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach.

These four patterns are pure types, which are not necessarily found in all districts we studied. In some cases, the patterns are found in combination—for example, in one large urban district, in which district leaders had a clear and powerful vision of reform that set in motion school-based efforts (a Vision-at-the-Top pattern) yet at the same time transmitted and interpreted reform provisions of a recent statewide reform law that affected many aspects of school life (thus functioning as a Conduit for External Reform Ideas). In fact, the district is widely credited with having provided one model on which statewide reform legislation was based.

The Uneasy Relationship Between District and School in School-Based Reform

By definition, the forces that drive school-based reform must in some degree reside at the school level. This fact creates a fundamental dilemma for district leaders who wish to promote and support school-based reform. Who takes the lead? How does leadership at one level coexist with leadership at the other? Can—and how can—simultaneous leadership at both levels complement rather than compete with one another?

This section examines issues regarding the locus of leadership for reform, in particular, the distribution of authority (e.g., over curriculum, hiring, budget, etc.), the degree of autonomy granted the school, the initial impetus for reform, and the development of ownership of it. The relationship that develops over time between district and school reflects the way the two resolve these issues and contributes directly to the four patterns of support described in the preceding section.

District or School as Driving Force

As the description of the four patterns made clear, the primary leadership for school-based reform can originate at either the school or district level, or even at both levels, but the distinct possibility remains that the two will compete for leadership in ways that compromise or constrain reform efforts. The issue continues over time, as the reform effort is designed, put in place, and modified to meet emerging needs. But at whatever stage in the process, a basic tension exists: the more the reform thrust becomes and remains districtwide in scope and district driven, the more the school-based nature of reform is called into question.

In the sites we studied, usually one or the other takes the lead in the reform process. Thus, one can characterize the reform relationship as primarily "district driven" or "school driven,"

especially in the early years of the reform process. This pattern appears to exist across the nation as well, as data from the district survey indicate (see Table 14 above). Curiously, although it is impossible to tell from survey responses the subtleties of each district's leadership configuration, it seems that district-driven cases outnumber those that are school driven. Approximately three-fifths of the districts nationwide (58 percent) report that the leader who initiated the most comprehensive school-based reform program in the district resides at the district level, compared with approximately two-fifths (38 percent) in which this leader resided at the school level. What is more, district-level staff maintain an active leadership role in the ongoing operation of school-based reforms in a surprisingly large number of districts. In a quarter of all districts, the day-to-day coordination of the most comprehensive school reform program resides at the district level as well.

Further evidence of the important role played by the district level in school-based reform is found in Table 15 (page 33), which contrasts the relative importance of different groups in planning for the most comprehensive school-based reform program in the district. District staff, school administrators, and teachers were rated (by district respondents to the survey) as nearly equally important in the planning process—on average, between "very" and "extremely" important on the survey item scale—whereas school board members, parents, and community representatives were rated as far less so—on average, between "somewhat" and "moderately" important.

At the extremes, the sources of district-driven and school-driven reform processes are easily recognized. The first of these extremes is most clearly seen in the first Vision at the Top case described earlier in the chapter. In that district, the superintendent not only set the tone and expectations for school-level reform but orchestrated its implementation from the moment he set foot in the superintendent's office. His first move was to replace principals in all schools with individuals who were strongly committed to, and capable of, the instructional leadership role envisioned by effective schools thinking. Subsequently, he required of all principals continuous monitoring of instruction. Regular refresher training for all relevant personnel in effective schools thinking keeps staff focused on the principles and goals of school reform set forth by the district administration. Furthermore, the district retains substantial control over the professional development agenda—of the seven staff development days per year allocated to each teacher, the district can determine four.

By contrast, reform efforts that were highly school driven occurred in several of the district support patterns described earlier. For example, in the second Behind-the-Scenes Support example above, both schools we investigated pursued reform paths determined to a large extent

by the beliefs and particular interests of the school staffs involved. In one case, the school chose to experiment with the OBE ideas that the district office made available to anyone who was interested. Subsequently, the school arranged professional development experiences for itself that, in fact, went far beyond what the district offered, and some of the school staff developed the expertise to begin offering workshops for interested teachers elsewhere in the district. The other school struck off in a different direction, with the aid of a state school improvement grant. It constructed a reform program emphasizing the emotional and physical wellness of students, academic improvement, and the use of technology. In both instances, the schools were led by strong, well-established principals; school staffs were cohesive and interested in innovative approaches to instruction. By intention, the district gave wide latitude to schools to undertake reform programs that made sense to the respective school staffs. Thus, conditions were especially favorable for reform to be school driven.

Between these two extremes, the story is often more mixed—that is, in some respects school-based reform is driven simultaneously by school and district forces. Also, in many instances, reforms driven initially from one level are gradually assumed by another, seen most clearly in cases where a district-level initiative was taken over at the school level, although there are some instances in which school reforms initiated by individual schools became the seeds of a subsequent districtwide reform thrust. Still, even where both district and school take visible leads in school-based reform, there is often a discernible "center of gravity" that resides more at one level than another.

Implications for Support

The "center of gravity" of the reform thrust has implications for the nature of support for school-based reform. If the district is the driving force for reform—and if school people accept the district in this role—then its support for reform is likely to feature the generation of ideas, the targeting of resources to particular needs (or even to schools), strategic assignment of individuals to schools, or other forms of activity that define or direct the actions undertaken by school people. Here, "support" means active intervention by district-level personnel. A different form of support seems called for where the school is the driving force for reform. There, active intervention by the district is likely to be interpreted as intrusion, and it may, in fact, impede reform efforts by school people. Instead, facilitative efforts by the district—among them, the garnering of discretionary resources, granting greater discretion over hiring and firing at the school level, and waiving district requirements—are likely to be seen by school people as particularly constructive.

In short, for reform to move forward unimpeded, there must be a fit between the locus of leadership for the reform effort (district or school or some combination) and the kinds of support that the district offers. Furthermore, key actors at the district and school levels must agree on the locus of control over key matters involved in the reform. Otherwise, a great deal of energy is consumed in the struggle over control, which may frustrate the achievement of reform goals. The implications of this point will become more clear through the discussion that follows regarding how districts create conditions that support school-based reform.

How Districts Create the Conditions That Support School-Based Reform

Districts can, in principle, control a number of the basic conditions that nurture school-based reform efforts. Six areas of district action are central to the story of school-based reform: (1) influencing who is in the school, (2) setting goals and boundaries for the school's reform efforts, (3) providing professional development opportunities and other forms of technical assistance, (4) setting and waiving requirements, (5) managing forces and conditions outside the school's control, and (6) garnering resources. We discuss each below, drawing on national survey data and on examples from our case reports.

Influencing Who Is in the School

District assignment and transfer policies, not to mention personnel selection criteria and processes, have a great deal to do with the cast of characters present in each school-based reform effort. Given the importance of catalytic leadership early in the reform effort (see Chapter 4) and the higher-than-normal demands placed on school staffs, actions that place the right kinds of people in schools seem to have a good deal to do with the prospects that school-based reform efforts will get off the ground.

In district-driven reform cases, the central office is more likely to play a directive role in personnel assignment, selection, etc. In school-driven instances, the district is more likely to grant discretion to the school site over hiring. But regardless of the locus of leadership, the district is the entity responsible for initial selection and placement of principals. Our case reports are replete with examples of schools in which the initial assignment of a principal to a school often gets the reform ball rolling.

With regard to teachers and special program staff, school leaders engaged in school-based reform typically want some discretion over hiring and often would prefer complete control. The national survey data presented above made clear that, on average, districts are reluctant to cede this kind of control to schools, although, as Table 22 shows, there is some variation across

Table 22

AUTHORITY GRANTED TO SCHOOLS OVER STAFF ASSIGNMENT AND HIRING, BY DISTRICT SIZE
(Percentage of Districts)

District Size	Staff Assignments	Hiring/Firing School Personnel
All districts	31	21
Very large	47	23
Large	51	30
Medium	36	27
Small	31	23
Very small	23	14

Table reads: Of all districts with school-based reform granting more authority to schools than previously (74 percent), 31 percent grant more authority in staff assignments.

Source: District survey.

districts of different sizes, especially with regard to staff assignment. Surprisingly, according to national survey data, larger districts are much more likely than smaller ones to grant greater authority to schools over staff assignment; there are nonetheless cases, as noted below, in which contractual agreements in large districts severely constrain school-level flexibility in hiring decisions. In school-driven cases, principals and others at the school site are often granted complete control—formally or informally—over who will work with them. The principal of one of the schools in a Behind-the-Scenes Support district indicated that, one way or another, he had hired nearly all of the staff in his building over a period spanning more than a decade.

More often, the school can try to exert some influence over hiring but must do so within major constraints. Districtwide assignment and hiring policies—and those of the teachers' union—can be a major stumbling block confronting school reformers who want to assemble a certain kind of staff in the school. The classic case we encountered involved seniority-based hiring policies that were enshrined in teachers' union contracts in several larger districts. In such instances, schools were obliged to fill vacant positions with teachers from within the district who were highest in seniority. For obvious reasons, this policy can force schools to take on staff who are incompatible, philosophically and in other ways (e.g., in teaching skills), with a reform effort. Among the districts and schools we studied, various attempts were made to get around this problem. For example:

- Schools sometimes sought waivers from contractual provisions governing seniority-based hiring.

- In one case, the district set up screening processes that permitted school people to choose among a group of candidates who were all of equivalent seniority level, yet had differing interest in, and skills for, reform activities.

- Interview processes were arranged that emphasized the high level of demand on teachers in the school engaged in reform activity, to encourage teachers to select themselves in or out.

- Other schools searched for external grant funding to permit school-level hiring that was not subject to union contractual provisions.

The most obvious solution from the school people's point of view is to give them greater say over who works in the school. But the net effect of doing so can be to concentrate reform-minded people in particular schools, leaving other schools staffed by individuals with less interest in reform and, possibly, less capability for change. Although "interest in reform" is not necessarily synonymous with general capabilities in teaching, there may also be a tendency for less-competent teachers to be maneuvered out of reforming schools and relegated to other settings. Once again, the district faces a dilemma: does it support school-based reform in certain schools at the expense of others?

Setting Goals and Boundaries for the Schools' Reform Efforts

Assigning staff to particular school buildings and controlling the hiring or firing process not only puts particular kinds of people in school buildings, it may predispose school buildings to tackle particular reform goals. In one extreme case, hiring for a new middle school being set up in one large urban district was done to put in place individuals with a particular philosophy of middle school education. But hiring is only one means for the district to set goals or boundaries for school reform efforts; the district has other tools at its disposal. Among the districts we studied intensively, the following district actions had the effect of setting or directing school people toward particular reform goals:

- making pronouncements (e.g., by issuing district mission statements that emphasize school-based reform);

- developing districtwide goal-setting processes (e.g., by setting up task forces with heavy representation by school people and a mandate to consider goals that relate to school-level reform);

- setting assessment targets (e.g., by insisting that school performance reach a particular standard);

- controlling the flow of reform ideas into the district (e.g., by inviting particular kinds of speakers whose ideas emphasize one or another approach to school-based reform);

- reinforcing external goals for school reform (e.g., by translating state reform provisions into terms that apply to schools).

For reasons that are obvious, the district's role in setting goals for school-based reform varied across the four patterns noted at the beginning of the chapter. In situations where districts were active in promoting a particular reform vision or planting seeds so that schools developed their own, district actions had a great deal to do with the goals that guided reform efforts. The obvious examples are found in Vision at the Top cases, in which the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other key individuals at the district office (e.g., the directors of staff development in two districts we visited) provided ongoing intellectual and operational leadership. Less obvious were cases where, more indirectly, the district moved school people toward a particular vision without articulating it or constraining school people to it.

In addition to, or instead of, directing school-based reform toward particular goals, districts can declare things to be up for reconsideration or else off limits, thereby setting boundaries around reform efforts. But there are questions about the ability of districts to control the scope of reform once the Pandora's box of possible changes has been opened. Just declaring something to be off limits doesn't make it so. Nonetheless, among our cases, there are clear instances of districts that gave explicit permission to school people to reconsider all facets of school functioning, while others wanted schools to focus primarily on curriculum, instructional strategies, the school's decision-making process, or some other discrete aspects of the school's operations.

Curiously, the invitation to reconsider everything was not necessarily liberating to school people. Only where school staffs combined dynamic leadership and an already-cohesive staff committed to the idea of reform was this invitation taken seriously and acted on. Elsewhere, school staff spent time and energy puzzling over what they should try to reform, as seen most dramatically in one large urban district that set up a network of more than 20 schools, all supported (at a modest level) by a state school improvement grant that encouraged any and all forms of restructuring. The district coordinator of the network commented:

> "The district (and the state) were incredibly vague about what the reforms should be all about. People who were independent thinkers could and did seize

> the opportunity. For most, the question came to mind: What are we supposed to do? When they were told, "Anything you want," they didn't know how to proceed initially. Most continued to do what they were already doing, only a little bit better."

Permission to experiment, alone, was often not enough to set in motion a wide-ranging reform effort at the school level.

In a more subtle way, the district could influence the scope of reform by the way it treated the reform thrust—for example, as a discrete project alongside other projects aimed at various specific targets (hands-on science among elementary students, the middle school dropout problem, bilingual services for newly arrived immigrant children, etc.) or as a comprehensive reconsideration of many or all facets of the educational program. We expected to find many districts in which, despite their rhetoric and better intentions, district and school people approached reform with a "project mentality," thereby reducing the scope of the reform in many people's minds. However, we found remarkably few instances of this kind of thinking among the sites we visited.

Providing Professional Development Opportunities and Other Forms of Technical Assistance

Our sample of cases makes clear that massive and continuing professional development is central to the long-term success of school-based reform and its penetration into actual practice. The district is one important provider, convener, or facilitator of professional development opportunities. In a sense, this is a natural and easy role for the central office to play, as suggested by national survey data, which indicate that the great majority of districts (87 percent) provide teachers with staff development related to school-based reform, and nearly the same percentage (86 percent) provide teachers with additional release time, which is typically used for staff development as well as planning activities.

Reflecting the differences in center of gravity discussed above, the initiative for staff development may reside at the district or school level, or both. In the sites we studied intensively, the professional development agenda was typically shaped most directly by the individuals and groups who represent the driving forces in the reform story. In LEA-driven cases, the professional development offered by the district was more likely to be determined by the district's vision of reform. By contrast, in school-driven instances, school staffs (or principals) were more responsible for the nature of the staff development experience.

As the data in Table 23 indicate, there are differences among larger and smaller districts in the extent of the district's role in initiating staff development related to school-based reform. The larger the district, the more likely district-level staff are to be the ones initiating staff development activities. An active district role apparently does not preclude school administrators or teachers from initiating staff development as well—in the majority of cases, regardless of district size, school-level people are also engaged in defining the staff development agenda. However, the national survey data suggest that the larger the district, the more likely district-level actors are to displace to some extent the role that school-level actors may play in initiating professional development. Note, for example, the reversal in the relative frequency of district staff versus school administrators in the table: the former are more often the initiators of reform-related staff development in the largest districts and less often so in the smallest.

Table 23

LEVEL OF STAFF INITIATING STAFF DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO SCHOOL-BASED REFORM
(Percentage of Districts)

District Size	District Staff	School Administrators	Teachers
All districts	56	76	47
Very large	88	71	43
Large	89	73	53
Medium	71	69	51
Small	64	82	56
Very small	39	78	39

Table reads: In all districts with school-based reform using staff development to support their efforts (91 percent), staff development was initiated by district staff in 56 percent of the districts.

Source: District survey.

The district can play various roles in providing professional development support; it need not be the only trainer or the one that defines what is to be done. Some alternative patterns of professional development are summarized and illustrated below, arranged in rough order from those in which the district exercised the greatest to the least control over the staff development offered.

- **The professional development center.** One district exemplified this approach to professional development assistance by creating a "professional development academy" with the aid of outside foundation funding.

- **Expert trainer.** A less ambitious variation on the theme of the professional development center occurred in instances where the district staff development director or others at the central office possessed expertise in areas related to the school-based reform effort.

- **Definer of a menu of professional development options.** The district might not possess the expertise required to provide staff development directly, but instead define a series of acceptable options for staff development, as in several cases we studied.

- **Professional development broker.** Rather than set out a menu of possibilities, the district could act as a middleperson between schools and outside experts or other sources, such as professional societies or universities.

- **Source of professional development resources.** The district is also one source of funds to support staff development activities devised by the school, and it may simply provide the wherewithal for school people to arrange for their own professional development.

Whatever its role in staff development, the central issue regarding the district's contribution to professional development was the extent to which it enabled school people to acquire skills, knowledge, and ideas that were appropriate to the school-based reforms in which they were engaged. The lack of fit between district-provided inservice training and what school people want has often been documented, and the potential for such an outcome is clearly present as the district becomes more heavily involved in staff development of various kinds.

Other forms of technical assistance (e.g., with grants writing, data gathering and analysis, troubleshooting, materials, and technology) are also important, but arguably less central than direct professional development of teaching staffs. Such technical assistance can involve fairly mundane operational details of reform—e.g., determining whether waivers are required for a change in the school day schedule and helping the school and district process the waiver request. On the other hand, school people often needed help addressing more fundamental matters, such as determining the most appropriate mode of assessing major changes in practice. Where it possessed the expertise—or knew how to access it—the district could be very helpful with these kinds of challenges.

Setting and Waiving Requirements

District requirements (which may be reinterpreted requirements emanating from the state or federal levels) guide, constrain, and otherwise complicate the life of people in schools who are engaged in school-based reform. Typically, school people want—or think they want—freedom from such requirements; district requirements are always an easy target of complaint at the school level. But the requirements themselves may act as an important stimulus to reform as much as a restraint on it.

District requirements affect many facets of school life, but at least the following four are central to most of the school-based reform efforts we studied: instructional planning, curriculum design, assessment (or evaluation), and accountability. (These are not the only things affected by policies or procedures set down at the district level. Others—for example, those affecting school budget or personnel—are discussed elsewhere in this chapter.)

The districts we studied used requirements as a strategic tool in support of school-based reform in two broad ways. Either they required new things of the schools—a more detailed long-range improvement plan, a particular change in curriculum, an expanded form of instructional supervision—or they freed schools from requirements—for example, by waiving normal school scheduling regulations, allowing greater latitude in the use of school specialists, or exempting schools from using district-approved textbook series. Roughly speaking, districts emphasized one or another of these depending on whether the reform process was primarily district driven or school driven. In district-driven sites, new requirements were a tool to get school staffs to engage more actively with reforms. In school-driven sites, districts tended more to grant waivers or to find other ways of releasing schools from what were often interpreted as unnecessary or counterproductive requirements.

Perhaps as a reflection of the greater variation among the schools within the district or the greater number of requirements in these settings, larger districts were much more likely than smaller ones to report that they granted waivers to schools engaged in school-based reform, as the data in Table 24 indicate. Among those that did grant waivers, not all waivers concerned requirements that originated from the central office; they also might have to do with union contract stipulations or the dictates of the state educational agency. The latter were especially noticeable; as shown in Table 25, nearly half of districts in all size categories granted or helped districts obtain waivers from requirements originating at the state level. (Some state initiatives also sought to increase school and district flexibility by permitting waivers for sites engaged in appropriate reforms.) The pattern in the survey data can also be a reflection of the formalized

role that requirements play in larger, more bureaucratized school districts. In smaller districts, permission to deviate from district requirements can be much more informal and be handled through verbal interactions rather than an official waiver.

Table 24

DISTRICT WAIVERS FOR SCHOOLS ENGAGED IN REFORMS

District Size	Percentage of Districts
All districts	19
Very large	47
Large	42
Medium	26
Small	16
Very small	14

Table reads: Of all districts with school-based reform, 19 percent granted waivers to schools engaged in reform activities.

Source: District survey.

Table 25

TYPES OF WAIVERS GRANTED SCHOOLS ENGAGED IN REFORM (Percentage of Districts)

District Size	District Requirements	Union/Contract Requirements	State Requirements
All districts	59	10	50
Very large	83	23	48
Large	72	19	56
Medium	63	15	50
Small	59	3	46
Very small	48	4	52

Table reads: Of all districts with school-based reform that grant waivers to schools engaged in reform (19 percent), 59 percent granted waivers from district requirements.

Source: District survey.

The granting of waivers did not ensure that the district provided a flexible environment for school-based reform, however. The process of considering and granting waivers could be cumbersome and, from the schools' point of view, was often a mixed blessing. In one large urban district, district respondents told us of spending inordinate amounts of energy researching and processing waiver requests from school staff in a network of state-funded schools engaged in school improvement. It was not easy to determine in many instances exactly what requirements applied and where they originated. As often as not, there was no formal requirement that pertained to a particular situation, only the perception by mid-level managers in the central office that something was required.

Managing Forces and Conditions Outside the School's Control

By formal responsibility and position, the district stands between the school and various potentially powerful groups outside the school—representing other schools and educators in the district, advocating the interests of certain community segments, or making policy at the regional or state level. In particular, the local teachers' union, advocacy groups and business interests in the local community, and the state education agency were likely to exert various pressures, both positive and negative, on school-based reform efforts. Whether they want to or not, district officials are forced to mediate between school-based reformers and these various groups. The way in which the district carries out its mediating role has a great deal to do with the ability of school-based reform efforts to thrive and be sustained.

Managing external forces and conditions includes a variety of roles. At least the following were especially important in one or more of the sites we studied: buffering school people from the outside world; interpreting and adapting the demands of the outside to make them more useful for the schools; and cultivating outside groups for the advantage of schools. As the variety of these roles suggests, external groups and forces were not always a threat, although they were often seen that way—sometimes by the district, sometimes by the school. These external groups are often a source of new resources and opportunities, as much as sources of constraints and further requirements or demands on the schools. Consider, for example:

- One innovative school in a small urban setting became identified as a model AMERICA 2000 school by virtue of its placement within an AMERICA 2000 community, one in which a grass-roots community coalition had set in motion community-wide efforts to address dropout problems.

- State government school improvement grants in several states provided the means and permission to experiment to a number of schools engaged in school-based reform.

- State advocacy of effective schools reforms in two of the states we studied intensively included training and on-site facilitation from state-funded consultants, who were well received by school people.

The dynamics of mediating between school-based reform efforts and the teachers' union, community, or state were sufficiently different to warrant separate discussions below.

Engaging the Teachers' Union—Especially in larger districts, the teachers' union was a force to be reckoned with. In some sites, teacher unions were at the forefront of reform efforts by encouraging teacher leadership and professionalism. In other sites, unions worked with district administrators to advance the reform agenda, as in one district in which the proposal to a state program to support a network of school-based reform efforts was co-authored by a district assistant superintendent and a union leader (subsequently, the network was coordinated by an individual who had been a teachers' union president). Often, however, the union represented a series of constraints, chiefly in the areas of hiring, extra duties and assignments, and other matters pertaining to working conditions in the schools. As noted earlier in this chapter, the seniority-based hiring systems enshrined in several districts' contracts made it extremely difficult for schools to recruit the kinds of teachers who were sympathetic to a particular reform effort.

Because the union represents teachers on a districtwide basis, individual schools are inherently at a disadvantage in eliciting union support or cooperation for a particular reform effort, unless school people happen to have close personal ties to the union (as was the case in several schools we visited). Because of this disadvantage, the district central office can play a pivotal role.

Districts in our sample that had been most successful in securing union support were those that had progressed beyond an adversarial labor vs. management model of collective bargaining to one emphasizing collective professional responsibility for educational improvement. In one extreme case, the union and district leadership were so comfortable with one another that they had forgone key elements of a collective bargaining agreement altogether. Elsewhere, districts and their unions had arrived at various arrangements in which responsibility for district educational improvement, including school-based efforts, was shared. For example, in one large urban district, a key feature of its wide-ranging reform plan was a new collective bargaining agreement that increased school staffs' flexibility.

District leadership could be proactive in engaging union leaders in the substance and philosophy of a given reform effort. This process was most clearly illustrated in South Mission

Unified School District, described earlier in this chapter, in which the superintendent took the union leader, along with district administrators, board members, and school administrators, to week-long workshops on the effective schools process. His intention in doing so was to expose the union head to the philosophy that he hoped would guide all reform efforts in the district.

Overall, school-based reform posed a dilemma for active teacher unions. Reforms' emphases on increased teacher professionalism and greater teacher authority at the school level fulfill long-held goals of the unions. Yet the move toward greater school-based authority and autonomy threaten traditional union support for uniform work rules and hiring criteria. We found that most districts and unions were still struggling to find an appropriate balance between these competing tendencies.

Cultivating the Community—The communities served by the districts in which we studied school-based reform were rarely homogeneous; rather, they were more likely to be collections of various interests, few of which expressed or held a concrete picture of what school-based reform could or should be. National survey data indicate that in only 2 percent of all districts did the initiative for school-based reforms emanate from the community. In many instances, the community exerted a more generalized pressure for better test scores, lower dropout rates, or more attention to this or that group, but it was unusual for a community to be a major motivating force directing schools to adopt schoolwide comprehensive reform efforts of the sort that are the focus of this study. Rather, the district was more typically in the position of having to "sell" or explain the idea of the reform approach to the community—or to some segments of it—especially where specialized allocations of funds were involved. District staff undertook active campaigns in some districts we studied to enlist the support of key constituencies within the community.

Forces in the community could also be actively hostile to certain reform attempts—or, more precisely, to what community members perceived to be happening in certain reform attempts. The classic case involved the hue and cry raised over one urban school's attempt to reconfigure the deployment of special program services within the overall academic program. Here, in an attempt to eliminate special program labeling and to reduce the class sizes for the teaching of key academic subjects, all staff in the building, including special program staff and even the librarian, were assigned small groups of students for the teaching of reading during a schoolwide reading/language arts block in the morning. One side effect was to eliminate some of the special programs in the building. Special program staff objected, and one took her complaints to the public—in particular, to minority advocacy groups, who were ever watchful for incursions on programs they thought were specially designed to serve their children. In the battle that ensued, the central office was caught in the middle, and it ultimately sided with the minority group

interests. The school stuck to its reform program, but not without severe cuts in resources and general loss of good will from the district.

Interpreting State Requirements and Mandates—In contrast to the weak role of the community in initiating school-based reform, forces at the state level—especially those emanating from the state education agency (SEA), the governor's office, state professional associations, or combinations of these groups—were an ever-present feature of the reform landscape in most of the situations we studied closely. Judging from the survey data we obtained, this assertion is true nationwide as well. Inescapably, the district acted as intermediary as it ignored, interpreted, or otherwise passed along reform ideas, resources, and requirements from the state level. National survey data suggest the following patterns:

- The state is sometimes the primary initiator of school-based reform, either on a large scale (as in Kentucky) or on a more modest scale (as in the states supporting pilot demonstrations of school-based reforms). Even though state agencies are far from the schoolhouse, state-level laws, programs, or other actions are sometimes the primary motivating force for school-based reforms. Of all districts nationwide, 10 percent indicated that state-level groups took the lead in initiating such reforms. In such instances, the district was likely to act as Conduit for External Reform Ideas, as described earlier in this chapter.

- The state's regulatory environment acts as a constraint on school-based reform in many instances. As was noted in Table 25, state requirements are nearly as often waived as district requirements among districts that grant waivers to schools engaged in reforms. The district often brokered these waivers, thereby providing schools with a critical form of support for the reform efforts in question.

- As a key form of support for school-based reform, the district carried out various forms of communication with state education agencies or other groups. Nationwide, a quarter of all districts reported doing so, as shown in Table 26. This form of support became more prevalent the larger the district.

The degree to which and the way in which districts managed state forces impinging on school reform efforts depend a great deal on the political culture of the state and the tradition establishing the degree to which the districts must pay heed to the state. For example, the Kentucky state reform bill mandated deep restructuring of educational programs in all schools. This situation contrasted sharply with other states having long-established traditions of respect for local control over educational matters, such as the Washington State Schools for the 21st Century program, a 5-year demonstration program offering $250,000 and greater flexibility under state requirements to a selected group of 30 schools and school districts across the state.

Table 26

COMMUNICATION WITH THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY AS A FORM OF DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

District Size	Percent of Districts
All districts	23
Very large	35
Large	33
Medium	28
Small	26
Very small	17

Table reads: Of all districts with school-based reform, 23 percent supported the effort by communicating with the state education agency.

Source: District survey.

The size of the state, in both geography and number of districts, also is a major factor, as in one instance we studied where educators in virtually all districts within the state can maintain personal relationships with state facilitators. In this case, state staff played a central role in bringing effective schools thinking to school and district staff.

Garnering Resources

School-based reform efforts often call for additional resources, for greater discretion by school people over the use of resources, or for both. Accordingly, the financial health of the district, the availability of discretionary resources at the district level, and the district's policies regarding school-level budgeting were intimately involved in the story of reform at each school we visited.

The district could play various roles in this regard. Among the districts we studied intensively, we encountered districts contributing resources to school-based reform efforts in a variety of ways, among them:

- creating special programs targeted to schoolwide improvement efforts of various kinds;
- helping schools secure external grant funding from the state, foundations, or private-sector firms;

- reallocating resources in the overall district budget to provide greater assistance to school-level reform efforts; and

- transferring budgetary authority to schools to make it easier for them to concentrate resources on key reform goals.

Various district-level factors influence the district's financial health and, indirectly or directly, these factors affect school-based reform efforts. For example, we encountered the recent or imminent effect of state budgetary crises on school-based reform efforts in states that had experienced major shortfalls in revenues in the wake of economic recession. Similarly, some of the local communities we visited had been hit hard by the recession and were having to retrench in various areas of school funding. In no case did these factors bring school-based reform efforts to a standstill; however, they did in some instances sharply curtail what school people planned to accomplish.

Implications of School-Based Reform for Change at the District Level

By supporting school-based reform, districts are almost inevitably challenged to change their way of doing business. District leaders may have taken up the challenge already in cases where school reform is primarily district driven; if not, they find themselves confronting the challenges by stages as school-driven reforms raise issues about the structure and nature of district activities.

School-based reforms typically need a great deal of support and, by their very nature, call into question basic assumptions about what should be taught, how the school day or year should be organized, how much responsibility should be placed in teachers' hands, and ultimately how resources should be deployed. The longer a school-based reform effort has been under way, the more likely such questions are to be raised, especially if the reform moves beyond curriculum and instruction to include decision making, planning, and assessment.

The implications for change at the district level can be avoided, of course, by relegating school reforms to project status, but we found little evidence of this in the districts we studied. In most cases, we found district-level people approaching the school-based reform as an integral element of a systemwide change.

Three kinds of changes at the district level accompanied the school-based reform efforts we studied. First, the district's organizational hierarchy tended to flatten. District office staffs were kept small relative to the size of the district. School people were often encouraged to, and did, assume a variety of district-level leadership roles in designing or implementing reform ideas

that might influence more than one school at a time. Organizational structures to formalize these roles were put in place—for example, curricular committees, effective schools planning teams, task forces of various sizes and shapes—in which principals and teachers played predominant roles. But more important, the creation of these structures was not accompanied by an increase in bureaucratic layers; rather, districts made the attempt to decrease the distance between superintendent and school-level people, in some cases assuring the latter of regular access to the district's titular leader.

Second, from the increased interaction across levels emerged shared conceptions of the content to be taught, the manner in which it was to be taught, and the way it would be assessed. Most important, the responsibility for content, pedagogical philosophy, and assessment approaches was felt to be shared, not owned by one level or another. The mutual ownership of curriculum and instructional vision by school and district staff represents a marked departure from the conventional decision-making pattern, in which one level or the other (typically, the district) defines what will be taught in its schools.

Third, the district often assumed a central role in supporting the schools' need for new knowledge and skills, and in so doing exercised a different kind of leadership. Thus, instead of fulfilling the staff development function in the way that typifies many districts across the land, with a modest district-determined menu of stand-alone workshops, many of the districts we studied made much larger and longer-term investments in staff development. These investments typically allowed the staff of a given school to have a major say over their professional development experiences; at the same time, district staff were often engaged in the dialogue over reform on a long-term basis. In the most elaborate case, a district staff development center worked closely with the staff of a high school and was intimately involved in the evolving school-based reform plan. In this case, and in many we studied, the district took on a new kind of leadership role as developer of professional talent, ideas, and directions.

The dynamics of change at the district level are somewhat different, depending on the primary source of initiative for change. In district-driven cases, district leaders typically have a broad vision of better schooling for the district and set about putting in place the resources, requirements, and supportive structures to realize the vision. The existence of this vision at the district level early in the reform process probably makes it more likely that district changes will be seriously considered, and even enacted, simultaneously with school changes. In school-driven cases, district leaders come to reconsider what they are doing and where they are headed based, in part, on what is taking place in their schools. At a minimum, schools ask for permission to depart from established curriculum or procedures. More than that, the models of schooling

demonstrated by reforming schools suggest alternative ways of configuring districtwide resources or requirements. Other schools may begin to show interest and may want to go in the direction of the reforming schools.

Wherever the center of gravity lies, schools and districts can influence one another's ways of doing business. The process ultimately ends up being collaborative, whether or not any of the parties set out to do it that way. Perhaps, in the long run, it is more productive to think in terms of mutual support patterns—those in which both district and schools support each other in the hard work of changing and improving how children are taught.

Summary: Districts as Consequential Actors in School-Based Reform

Districts are a consequential actor in school-based reform. One way or another, most of the schools we studied depended on their districts for many things: good will, tolerance (if not explicit permission) for experimentation, resources, protection from hostile external forces, and the creation of supportive organizational structures, to name only some of what districts can provide.

There is clearly no one "best" role for districts to play. Rather, our analyses suggest that the optimal form of district support depends on the fit between district- and school-level visions of reform and on the resolution of the inevitable authority issues that are involved. On balance, the odds of sustaining promising school-based reforms over the long term are probably better in districts that assume an active role in support of these reforms, either in Vision at the Top or Behind-the-Scenes Support mode, rather than in the more passive patterns.

But if there is no "best" way to support reform at the school level, there are clearly ways for districts to stand in its way, even when they are intending to help. Although our sample was selected to focus on places where school-based reforms were well under way (hence implying at least a modicum of positive district support), there were instances of district policies, actions, and conditions that seriously impaired school-level initiatives. In particular, strict adherence to federal compliance requirements, insistence on uniformity across schools, unwillingness to grant schools greater decision-making authority, and inflexibility about district procedural requirements were among the ways that central office officials thwarted the designs of school-level reformers.

Our broad conclusion, that districts are important to the success of school-based reform, may seem at odds with arguments advanced by some observers of the education scene today. Some view the district office as a superfluous layer of bureaucracy and suggest that it should be done away with altogether. Others, who see it primarily as a constraint on creativity and initiative

at the school level, call for it to be downsized and given only those custodial functions for which there are clear economies of scale. Both arguments hold that the district cannot help but locate decision making at a greater distance from teaching and learning, siphon off resources that could be used at the school level, and seek to homogenize the inherently unique character of each school. Seen from this perspective, the district is the enemy of school-based reform.

Our findings suggest otherwise. First, the district is often the initial stimulus for school-based reform. Although this may seem inconsistent with the concept of school-based reform, many schools that are receptive or susceptible to reform—perhaps a majority—do not spontaneously imagine new and better missions, organizations, curricula, and approaches to instruction. Something must catalyze the reform process, and in many cases we studied the initial catalyst lay at the district level. Second, the district can assemble a critical mass of resources (including funds, knowledge, materials, and specialized forms of assistance) that school-based reformers need and are hard pressed to come up with by themselves. School-based reform is hard, labor-intensive work, and we have evidence that school people engaged in this process appreciated the resources that often came their way from the central office. Moreover, professional development sponsored by the central office was often a source of key reform ideas, even leadership, for the schools. Third, the district offered a broader professional forum for reform ideas, in which the staff of one school might interact on an intense and regular basis with other school staffs in developing their thinking.

However, our analyses suggest that, to play a consequential role, the district often needs to change the way it does business. In this sense, our ultimate conclusion is that the district is important to the success of school-based reform in proportion to its willingness to reform itself. Otherwise, wittingly or unwittingly, it may indeed squash what school-level people do to improve schooling.

6 STATE AND FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

To understand the context within which a school-based reform takes place, we turn now to the role of state and federal governments. Much of what happens at the school level is profoundly influenced by decisions made by policy makers in state capitols and in Washington. Over the past decade in particular, states and the federal government have assumed leadership roles in promoting reform agendas. In this chapter, we describe what we learned about these two important contexts for reform.

The State as a Context for School-Based Reform

States form the context for the evolution of local school-based reforms in two distinct ways. First, and most importantly, through leadership, funding patterns, curricular and assessment policies, and myriad other policy decisions, state governments define, to a great extent, what schools can and cannot do. Implicit in this statement is the conclusion that state support can either inhibit or facilitate the progress of bottom-up reform efforts. We focus in this section on how state policies translate into assistance or hindrance at the local level.

States also serve as a context for reform in a second and broader sense. State boundaries circumscribe the political and economic context for education, defining the state government's historical role in education as well as local educators' reaction to it (McDonnell & McLaughlin, 1982). Thus, for example, we would expect school and district staff to react differently to a new statewide assessment instrument in California, with its long history of active state involvement in local K-12 education, than local educators in Kentucky, who have traditionally experienced much less direct state intervention.

Finally, a note about our presentation of the data will help the reader interpret the findings in this chapter. Case study findings are clearly identified as such. When we report data from the state telephone survey, the information pertains to a program or programs in the state chosen by the state-level respondent to best represent the state's support for school-based reform. As such, these data do not reflect all reform efforts going on at the state level.

Case Study Portraits of State Support for School-Based Reform

We purposefully chose five case study states that differed in their historical approaches to assisting K-12 education and in their current initiatives related to school-based reform. In this section, we provide more detailed descriptions of improvement activities in these states: California, Connecticut, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Washington. We use these portraits to highlight the different strategies states employ to support reform, outlining the differences across states.

California: Combining Challenging Curriculum and School Autonomy in Pursuit of Reform—California has long been among the leading states in adopting innovative practices, as reflected in its championing of compensatory education in the early 1960s, its commitment to school-based decision making in the 1970s, and its development of trend-setting curricular frameworks in the 1980s. A state with an extremely diverse and growing student population and reeling from a series of budget cuts over the past few years, California has managed to maintain a focus on school-based reform.

The cornerstone of California's reforms has been a content-driven approach to school improvement. Between the state curricular frameworks, the guides to implementing those frameworks, the state's textbook adoption policies, and its active network of professional development projects (e.g., the California Mathematics Project), reform in California has focused first on improving what takes place in the classroom between students and teachers. Not surprisingly, the reforms in Cicely Elementary School we described in the second chapter resulted initially from their teachers' involvement in a state-sponsored professional development project.

A parallel development has been a series of state efforts dating back to the late 1970s and continuing through the present to promote greater school-level decision making. The first is the state school improvement program, which provides each elementary school and a majority of secondary schools with discretionary dollars ($30 to $107 per student per year) for reform activities. As a condition of receiving the funds, schools agree to form representative school councils that decide how the funds are to be spent. Schools also agree to nonpunitive reviews of their programs' quality conducted by peers from neighboring districts.

More recently, the state has begun a demonstration program, authorized by California Senate Bill 1274, that provides 210 schools with grants to restructure their schools. The goal is to free schools from unnecessary state regulation and promote innovative experimentation and reorganization of teaching and learning. According to this legislation, "restructuring involves a

revision in school governance and management procedures in order to enable professional educators to respond appropriately to pupil requirements, with the central goal of improving learning for all California public school pupils" (SB 1274, Chapter 1463, California Statutes of 1990). The state's goal is to fund a series of exemplary sites that can serve as models for other schools.

Another long-standing reform fosters local discretion for special programs. The School-Based Coordination Program Act of 1981 enables schools to voluntarily receive categorical funds in a lump sum to enhance flexibility and coordination in the allocation of funds for different student populations. Like the school improvement program, these activities are governed by school site councils.

These innovations in curriculum and instruction and in school governance have outpaced the state's assessment system. As of our visits, the state was just piloting a series of new tests that were designed to capture students' ability to master the more challenging curricula being put in place in the state's schools. Only in the domain of writing does the state have a performance-based assessment instrument in use. Tests in mathematics, science, and other subject areas are still in development—in part because of the combination of tight state budgets and the high cost of developing new assessments.

From the local perspective, the state provides clear, if sometimes heavy-handed, leadership while offering a series of resources that could be used flexibly to address local priorities, particularly in the areas of curriculum and instruction. As such, California is an exemplar of states where substantial state expertise and technical support have been used to instigate and facilitate local reform efforts. The state has tried to unify a multifaceted reform strategy by exerting strong content-oriented state leadership and simultaneously encouraging more school-level innovation.

Connecticut: Building Local Capacity by Supporting School-Based Reform—In spite of recession-induced cutbacks, the Connecticut State Department of Education has maintained its long-standing support for school-based reform that remains a model for the rest of the country. An early subscriber to the effective schools research base, Connecticut established a school effectiveness unit within the state department in 1979, one of the first states to do so. This unit assembled a number of consultants to work directly with schools as local staffs assessed school quality and developed effective schools plans. These consultants were also drawn from the compensatory education unit, a fact that reflects the strong equity orientation of the process

The most important effect of hands-on involvement of state experts with schools has been to build local capacity for sustaining change. School effectiveness is also seen as laying the groundwork for the emerging statewide trend toward school-level decision making. Many districts have gradually—and to varying degrees—changed from top-down bureaucracies to organizations that enlist school staff in schoolwide assessment, problem-solving, and other administrative and management matters. Again, these increases in local capacity use skills that have been introduced and inculcated by the school effectiveness process.

In addition to these school-based efforts, the state has been active in the areas of curriculum, assessment, and teacher training. In the late 1980s, the state published the "Common Core of Learning," providing a comprehensive vision of what high school graduates should know. This document set clear learning outcomes for all Connecticut students and helped to guide subsequent reform efforts at both the state and local levels. In the area of assessment, the state developed a criterion-referenced test (the Connecticut Mastery Test) that went far beyond the instruments previously used in the state's schools. The state department developed an innovative program that prepares more experienced teachers to work as mentors with beginning teachers throughout the state. This program supports teacher progress in classroom improvement that is consistent with these state-level reforms.

Connecticut is a state where a pioneering, correlate-based effective schools model has engendered an expanded sense of state and local missions for schools. The state is facilitating local reforms, and local practitioners are increasing their decision-making roles as well as participating in state-level changes. The recent fiscal retrenchment of the state as a whole makes it hard to foresee what types of state technical assistance and professional development will be available to Connecticut schools in the future. Fortunately, the school effectiveness process ran at full strength for more than a decade and is a major reason why locals are now equipped to implement their own reforms.

Kentucky: Reinventing the Whole System of Schooling—In 1989, Kentucky's entire state system of schooling was declared unconstitutional by the Kentucky Supreme Court. The state's legislative response was the Kentucky Educational Reform Act of 1990 (KERA), the most comprehensive state reform mandate in the nation.

Kentucky is an important case because the impetus for revamping its schools came from outside the education system. There is considerable business and political support for these changes, including substantial corporate investment (representing a 10-year commitment) along

with increased public funding. The main features of KERA, which schools and districts are scrambling to implement, include:

- school-based decision making by councils of principals, teachers, and parents with responsibility for staffing, curriculum design, scheduling, student assignment, and all management activities;
- accountability tied to school performance, including awards to teachers in schools that improve over a 2-year period, and state intervention followed by suspension of tenure and school closure for those that fail;
- performance-based assessment used as part of the state accountability program;
- ungraded primary program (K-3) in all elementary schools;
- additional professional development funds to local districts;
- s new state department of education and a new state board of education redrawn from the ground up; and
- additional money to schools and equalization of resources.

This package of reforms includes a number of provisions to support school autonomy and teacher professional development, combined with other provisions restricting the authority of local school staff to design their own programs. For example, the law gives a significant amount of authority to school councils, which, among other responsibilities, can choose the texts to be used in the school's classrooms. Yet the law mandates that every school adopt multigraded classrooms in the primary years—providing little flexibility for alternative arrangements.

During our visits in Spring 1992, Kentucky schools were finishing their first year of implementation. (The remaining time frame extends through 1996.) The state has plans for continued monetary support of KERA and will work to sort out the new relationship between itself and school districts as it moves to replace personnel in struggling districts. For now, the main challenge facing the state is building its own capacity to manage a statewide restructuring effort and delivering staff development and other resources to schools and districts.

South Dakota: New Directions in the Traditional State Role—A state with a tradition of local control of schooling, South Dakota has recently become much more active in the reform arena with two different initiatives. The first, the South Dakota Effective Schools Process, is a correlate-based, school-level improvement planning strategy that involves state technical

assistance, faculty self-assessment of school program quality, and data disaggregation. New groups of schools have begun the 3-year process each year since 1989-90.

The second activity is the South Dakota Modernization Project. This restructuring initiative is providing large, 3-year grants to eight school districts, and state workshops on a variety of school reform topics (e.g., Outcome-Based Education). As in the case of effective schools participants, a new group of eight districts joined the project in 1992-93. Impressed with the progress so far, the state legislature allocated additional funds to the Modernization Project.

Both of these change efforts come from the state education department and are designed to improve local capacity for shepherding school- and district-level transformation. They signal a shift in the state role from primarily monitoring to providing technical assistance and other resources to support educational change. The effective schools program, the state's response to the governor's concern about educational quality and accountability, predated the Chapter 2 effective schools requirement. (Chapter 2 effective schools dollars currently support this effort.) Modernization is a more comprehensive response to the national reform agenda. Recipients are free to pursue their own change agendas with state assistance.

Even though effective schools and modernization are distinct activities, the collaborative problem solving and decision making that underlie the effective schools process are seen as useful prerequisites for the less well structured modernization initiative. One principal whose school is involved in both processes calls effective schools a "staging area" for modernization.

South Dakota is a good example of a state where the reform agenda is new but ambitious. Given the strong tradition of local control of schools in this state, both of these programs represent novel approaches because they depend on the participation of a range of local staff in shaping local improvement agendas. Taken together with the new technical assistance role for the state, these components of the reform agenda reflect a major departure from the status quo in this conservative state.

Washington: Promoting Local Ownership of the Reform Process—Washington State, with its own strong history of local control, represents another approach for supporting school-based reform: a visible demonstration program that maximizes local discretion. The program, called Schools for the 21st Century, reinforces this tradition by putting resources in the hands of local educators to enable them to pursue promising restructuring agendas. The state education department has not attempted to guide this process but instead tries to facilitate local change

priorities. The Schools for the 21st Century program makes 6-year restructuring grants and helps waive state and local regulations that may stand in the way of local reform.

Schools for the 21st Century was spearheaded by the governor 5 years ago. It receives support from the legislature ($2 million per year) and is administered by its own unit in the state department in conjunction with the state board of education. Thirty-three grants have been made to districts, subparts of districts, and schools. School year 1991-92 was the fourth year of implementation for local grant recipients. Other than favoring proposals that demonstrated widespread buy-in by teachers, administrators, and parents, the state has intentionally refrained from specifying reform goals and visions of desirable practice. Rather, the state has issued a call for good, innovative ideas, arguing that interesting problem-solving experiments at school sites are especially likely to be helpful to other schools in Washington.

The grants enable the 111 participating schools (in 29 districts) to lengthen the school year and provide additional planning and professional development time for teachers. Grant recipients can also obtain waivers from certain state requirements. Most participating schools receive a discretionary account of approximately $50,000 per year. Following a statewide trend toward Outcome-Based Education, about half of the 21st Century grant recipients we visited are implementing curricular changes of this type. Again, the state has not put preconditions on the content or direction of local 21st Century pilots, so there are other schools that are focusing on noncurricular improvements as well.

Like South Dakota, Washington has linked its principal reform to the local-control tradition of the state's school system. The state has made a commitment to field-based experiments and innovations. It is interesting that this early example of state support through direct grants recognizes the need for staff time to come up with promising reform strategies at the school level.

What States Are Doing to Support School-Based Reform

Each of these five sample states has adopted a unique approach to supporting school-based reform. But across the five states, we find common strategies, pursued somewhat differently, that affect the willingness and ability of local educators to move forward with reform efforts. In particular, states lead reform by setting challenging goals, establishing appropriate authority relationships, providing needed technical assistance and resources, and establishing accountability mechanisms. Where relevant, we supplement the case studies with data from the state surveys.

Setting Goals for Student Learning

States play a powerful leadership role in promoting reform by setting clear and challenging student learning goals. Such goals can guide local reform efforts as well as any assessment or accountability system states or districts adopt. If schools are to be granted more autonomy in fashioning their own reforms, it makes sense to provide them with direction concerning what the outcomes of those efforts are expected to be.

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning illustrates one approach to setting overall student learning goals. The Common Core is neither a mandate nor a curriculum, but rather a "comprehensive vision of what a high school graduate should know" (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1987). The document is organized into three sections: (1) attributes and attitudes, such as motivation and persistence; (2) skills and competencies, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening; and (3) understandings and application, which includes arts, careers, and vocations. Connecticut has used the Common Core in various ways to guide local reform, including developing new assessment instruments aligned with its goals.

California's curricular frameworks represent another approach to goal setting. The frameworks explicitly address the skills students will need in a particular subject area to move on to further education and/or careers after high school. They do not mandate what teachers teach, but rather are meant to represent a road map for teachers and administrators to change classroom practice to create more challenging learning experiences for students. At the same time, the state uses the frameworks to assess textbooks, and schools can be reimbursed only for textbooks formally approved by the state. Thus, the frameworks tend to have a powerful effect on what gets taught.

In the absence of specified learning goals, local educators can find themselves floundering to anchor their reforms to specific targets. Staff in a number of the Washington State 21st Century Schools argued that they did not have sufficient direction from the state regarding their reform efforts. Similarly, a number of teachers in Kentucky found the state's learning goals and valued outcomes to be too broad in the absence of curricular frameworks, which had yet to be developed during our visit.

Balancing Authority Relationships

A major dilemma facing states is how to balance their leadership role, in which they seek to push schools along the reform path, with a need to provide schools sufficient autonomy to devise reforms that reflect local conditions and needs. Who should control the reform process?

The case study states have addressed this issue in different ways. Washington State has adopted an approach in which a small set of demonstration projects are eligible to apply for waivers from any state law or regulation that appears to get in the way of their reforms. California similarly allows certain schools undergoing reform to receive waivers from state categorical program requirements. Moreover, schools are free to use supplementary School Improvement Program funds in almost any way they see fit. However, the control the state asserts through its textbook adoption process still wields a heavy influence over the content and form of instruction in the state.

Kentucky offers the more far-reaching example of moving control for the change process closest to the school level. The state reform law (KERA) mandates that each school have an elected school council by 1996 and that these councils have control over a variety of key decisions, including, for example, certain budgetary expenditures and curricular emphases. Thus, in contrast to California, a school council could, with a state waiver, choose a set of textbooks not formally approved by the state, as long as the school evidenced progress in terms of student achievement.

Kentucky's transfer of authority to the school level for such key decisions is combined, however, with certain mandates that, for some schools, conflict with the notion of local control. The most obvious such example concerns the primary program, by which every elementary school in the state is required to form multiage K-3 classrooms. The state also mandates the composition of the school councils that are supposed to make decisions. Kentucky, then, is sending a mixed message to schools. On one hand, KERA is based on the premise that the schools should have the authority and flexibility to design their own programs and be held accountable on the basis of student performance. But on the other hand, its mandates limit the creativity of schools in doing just that.

Connecticut, which has both a traditional effective schools program and a comprehensive reform agenda that integrates curriculum with assessment, manages to keep the state at the forefront of reform with very little control over districts or schools. Here, the effective schools process set the stage early on for school-level decision making. State staff who serve as effective schools facilitators work directly with school staff, not district staff. The structure of the process has given school staff experience and expertise in identifying their problems and solving them. Every reform initiative in Connecticut has been planned and developed with the involvement of school staff, district staff, teacher preparation institutions, and parents. This state's local tradition, reinforced by thoughtful policy making on the part of the state agency, has carried it through a full decade of tumultuous education reform.

Interestingly, in states such as South Dakota, with long histories of local control, there may be less need for the state to take extraordinary steps to provide schools and districts with more autonomy. In these cases, the schools already had sufficient freedom to move forward with changes of their own making.

Generally, state agencies and districts do not credit state mandates with having major influence over the initiation of their reform initiatives. Data from the state and district surveys (Table 27) point out the relatively low significance of mandates relative to other influences, such as the achievement level of students and the quality of instruction.

Table 27

IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR INITIATING SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

Reason	Mean Rating[a] of States[b]	Mean Rating of All Districts[c]
Achievement level of students	4.1	4.0
Quality of instruction	3.7	4.1
Needs of disadvantaged students	3.5	3.6
Availability of funds through Chapter 2	3.2	2.0
Chapter 2 requirement for effective schools programs	3.0	NA
State mandate	2.3	2.3
Community pressure	2.2	1.9
Chapter 1 program requirement	1.9	2.1
District mandate	NA	2.7

Table reads: State respondents gave achievement level of students a 4.1 mean rating of importance (on a 1- to 5-point scale) as a reason for initiating school-based reform.

[a] Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, where 5 = extremely important, 4 = very important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = somewhat important, and 1 = not at all important. (Midpoint is 3.0.) Reasons are ordered by mean rating.

[b] Source: State telephone survey. These data pertain specifically to the reform effort that was the primary focus of the telephone interview.

[c] Source: District survey.

Providing Technical Assistance and Professional Development

Local educators attempting to improve their schools are typically confronted with a series of tasks for which they have little or no preparation, thereby creating a demand for significant technical assistance and professional development opportunities. In general, we found that states recognize these needs. The state survey data show that nearly all states sponsor some form of staff development, deliver technical assistance, and provide information about school-based reform to districts and schools (Table 28). State-sponsored staff development focuses on effective instruction, the research base of reform, schoolwide planning, parent involvement, shared decision making, and instructional leadership. Technical assistance includes help in planning, implementing, and evaluating school-based reform.

These survey data do not allow us to differentiate between the many strategies states pursue to provide assistance to local schools, nor do they point to the magnitude of state efforts. The case studies provide more detailed descriptions of state assistance activities.

Table 28

STATE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-BASED REFORM (1990-91)

Type of Support	Percentage of States
Staff development (e.g., workshops, institutes)	98
Technical assistance (e.g., program development, evaluation)	94
Of those providing technical assistance:	
Technical assistance in program evaluation or arranging for outside evaluation	94
Technical assistance in needs assessment or other program development	92
Technical assistance in carrying out the program	92
Dissemination of information about effective schools	94
Provision of funds (e.g., mini-grants, competitive or need-based grants, direct grants)	82
Coordination of local effective schools programs (e.g., networking)	69

Table reads: 98 percent of states provide staff development to school staff.

Source: State telephone survey. These data pertain specifically to the reform effort that was the primary focus of the telephone interview.

The support involved in a school's participation in Connecticut's effective schools process is perhaps the most comprehensive example we encountered. Here state staff are assigned to a school and (1) help the school to form a planning team, (2) provide the team with training in schoolwide planning, (3) administer needs assessment surveys and provide the school with an analysis of the data, (4) sponsor a "planning institute" to help the team devise strategies for addressing the school's weaknesses, (5) help the team to implement their plans, and (6) provide follow-up assistance and evaluation. South Dakota has adopted a similar approach to its effective schools program.

The other case study states had less comprehensive schoolwide assistance programs, but each put a great deal of emphasis on helping administrators and teachers to move forward with reforms. Interestingly, a number of the states have begun to adopt innovative approaches to technical assistance and staff development aimed at building ongoing capacity at the local level. For example, Kentucky encourages districts to join in collaboratives and consortia through which schools and districts can leverage their funds to purchase professional development that they might not get access to individually. California has begun to build a series of teacher networks tied together by reforms in particular content areas. Connecticut has a program that pairs experienced and novice teachers for a year. Each of these examples seeks to move professional development beyond the traditional one-time workshop.

Financing Local Reforms

In addition to providing varying amounts of technical assistance and professional development, the majority of states (82 percent) also claimed to provide funds for school-based reform (Table 28). State dollars are an important resource for states as well as districts in supporting reform (Table 29). Although not the most frequent source cited, funds from the regular state budget are used by nearly two-thirds of states. Unfortunately, we do not know from these data the amount contributed by each source, nor is it clear exactly what forms these funds took. The case studies illustrate this type of support more specifically.

California, Washington, and South Dakota are each awarding restructuring grants on a competitive basis to districts. These grants are all intended to foster creativity for local reform. Washington's Schools for the 21st Century, recognizing the need for teacher planning and collaboration, devised grants to provide 10 additional days per year for this purpose to participating schools. Modernization grants in South Dakota pay half the salaries of local project directors (usually teachers) to ensure that decentralized, school-based restructuring activities are sustained over time. California's restructuring initiative (SB 1274) anticipated the need for an

extended period of design and conceptualizing activities and awarded planning grants to schools with promising reform ideas.

Table 29

FUNDING FOR SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

Source	Percentage of States Using Source[a]	Percentage of All Districts Using Source[b]
State Chapter 2 funds	86	47
Regular state budget	63	88
Specially earmarked state funds	33	45
Chapter 1 funds	16	55
Other federal funds	18	38
Local Chapter 2 funds	NA	31
Regular district budget	NA	88

Table reads: 63 percent of states use regular state education budget funds to sponsor school-based reform.

[a] Source: State telephone survey. These data pertain specifically to the reform effort that was the primary focus of the telephone interview.

[b] Source: District survey.

A central component of the reform act in Kentucky is an increased level of financial commitment from the state along with a more equitable distribution of all educational resources. From 1990 to 1992, state and local funding for education increased 25 percent, and the disparity between the richest and poorest districts was reduced by one-third. The budget situation in this state may affect that commitment. In fact, persistent budget problems in Connecticut and California have already jeopardized those states' ambitious reform plans.

Creating Appropriate Accountability Mechanisms

A final strategy that states can use to support reform involves assessment and accountability. Creating and/or adopting assessment instruments that reflect the state's articulated learning goals can have a powerful influence on teachers' propensity to adopt similar goals. If states can put a good test in place, they can profit from teachers who have a tendency to align their teaching with the tests. Using these assessments as part of an accountability program can provide a politically acceptable counterweight to proposals to give schools more autonomy. This

strategy involves providing schools with more authority to design their own reforms in exchange for greater accountability for results.

Although the states we studied all were interested in rethinking their assessment and accountability systems, each had to struggle with technical and political problems inherent in doing so. Technically, it is difficult to develop a valid and cost-effective assessment instrument that actually measures the kind of critical thinking reflected in state education goals. California exemplifies the problems inherent in creating new assessment instruments. The state has promulgated new and more challenging learning goals since the early to mid-1980s, but has not yet been able to develop a full assessment system to track schools' progress in meeting those goals. The state has gone far to develop items and pilot new tests that are more performance oriented and focused to a greater degree on critical thinking. Yet, in large part because of a series of budget shortfalls, these tests have never been fully developed and none—with the exception of a writing assessment—is currently in place.

The criterion-referenced Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) is an explicit state attempt to create a better test. It emphasizes higher-order concepts in place of rote memorization and computation. Still, Connecticut state department staff are not completely happy with it and are piloting new, performance-based assessments in mathematics and science. South Dakota is also piloting items in mathematics and science.

Kentucky has taken the greatest steps toward implementing alternative assessments in line with the state's new learning goals. The state contracted with an out-of-state firm to develop, oversee the administration of, and score a series of new tests in various subject areas. In the first year of the reform, performance-based tests were administered in mathematics, writing portfolios were collected and scored, and a new, critical-thinking-skills-oriented multiple-choice test (covering reading, social studies, science, and math) was given in grades 4, 8, and 12. In subsequent years, the multiple-choice test is to be replaced by a performance-based assessment and new, performance-based tests are to be developed for the other subject areas.

Regardless of the quality of a state's assessment system, however, employing test results as part of an accountability system raises a series of political issues. What should happen to schools whose students perform poorly (or well) on state-mandated tests? In some states, Washington and South Dakota in our sample, long traditions of local control preclude the state from placing any type of sanctions on poorly performing schools. In fact, unless a school is on the verge of collapse, most state governments are reluctant to take any punitive action. More often, states follow California's example: tests are mandated and the state publicizes the results, which usually

end up in statewide and local papers. The fear of negative publicity and the desire for favorable coverage are often the only factors that make the state test results important to local educators.

Again, Kentucky's is the most far-reaching reform in this area. In Kentucky, schools are given a biennial "threshold" target score based on their first year's results. Schools that meet or surpass those scores are to be rewarded with extra funds and bonuses for teachers. Schools that fail are required to develop improvement plans with the assistance of the state. Schools that continue to fail are labeled "in crisis," teachers and principals are put on probation and may be dismissed, students can transfer to successful schools, and the school is taken over by a "distinguished educator" chosen by the state.

The Emerging State Role in Supporting Reform

These findings suggest that, in many states, the most promising reform strategies may combine increased state leadership and support with less direct state control over local education. State governments generally have (or have the potential for) political potency and technical and financial capacity that far exceed those of nearly all local districts. As such, they are uniquely placed to support reform efforts.

The key to state leadership of reform efforts appears to be the establishment of a well-articulated vision of what the state's schools are supposed to produce in terms of student learning. Backed by a consensus of state leaders and communicated with sufficient clarity and specificity, such a vision can rally public support for reform efforts and harness the necessary resources to move reform forward—as has happened over the past decade in California and the last few years in Kentucky.

The key to state support appears to be linking this vision to a series of state-sponsored activities to build local capacity to carry out reforms. Of particular importance is the provision of professional development, assistance in such thorny areas as student assessment, and supplementary financial resources. Importantly, the case study data suggest, such capacity building has to be viewed as a long-term developmental process by which districts, schools, and networks of teachers combine to build an ongoing ability to improve themselves without the need to involve outside expertise at every turn.

Finally, states need to find an appropriate balance between state direction and local control. Certainly our findings suggest that schools undergoing reform seek more autonomy from what they perceive as unnecessary regulations—and in those cases (e.g., Washington's 21st Century

Schools or California's restructuring schools), the granting of greater authority to schools has had no deleterious effects. The extent to which states choose to grant such autonomy, as well as the degree to which states choose to hold schools accountable for results, will necessarily depend on their own political contexts.

Federal Support for School-Based Reform

Unlike the states, the federal government has little direct control over what takes place in schools. Yet over the past three decades, the federal government has played a vital leadership role in promoting school reform. This leadership function has been given a sharper focus recently by the administration's reform legislation, Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Goals 2000 sets into law the national education goals established in 1990 by the president and the nation's governors. It aims to reinvent American schools by creating a framework for establishing high academic and skill standards, and by providing the leadership and support states and communities need to reach those standards.

Another form of federal support had more direct bearing on data from the present study: the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments to ESEA (P.L. 100-297). This legislation codified a federal commitment to school-based reform by adding greater accountability to the Chapter 1 program and a more explicit targeting strategy to the Chapter 2 program. This change to Chapter 2 included the requirement that states use a portion of their funds to support effective schools programs. The combination of federal mandate and federal money has been among the factors leading states and districts to initiate and expand their school reform activities.

In this section, we summarize what we learned about federal support for school-based improvement. We begin by describing the influence of federal requirements contained in the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Education Amendments. We then outline federal funding of school reform activities at the state and local levels through the Chapter 2 program. Data are drawn from the state and district surveys and the case studies.

Federal Mandates as Reasons for Initiating School-Based Reforms

There is no question that the federal requirement contained in the 1988 Chapter 2 legislation that states spend a portion of their funds on effective-schools-related programs influenced state reform activities. Evidence of this influence shows up in the state survey data. Table 30 shows that for those states that began their school-based reform efforts after passage of the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments, the Chapter 2 requirement was the most important reason for beginning

their program. Further evidence of the effect of the Chapter 2 legislation on state improvement efforts showed up when we asked state administrators how their use of federal Chapter 2 dollars had changed since 1988. The highest percentage of states (54 percent) responded that they placed new emphasis on supporting effective schools programs (Table 31).

Table 30

REASONS FOR INITIATING STATE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-BASED REFORM[a]

Reason	Mean Rating[b]	
	Post-'88[c]	Pre-'88
Chapter 2 requirement for effective schools programs	3.9	--
Achievement level of students	3.8	4.5
Availability of funds	3.6	2.8
Quality of instruction	3.5	3.9
Needs of disadvantaged students	3.4	3.5
State mandate	2.2	2.3
Chapter 1 program requirements	2.2	1.7
Community pressure	2.0	2.5

Table reads: In those states that began reform efforts after 1988, state respondents gave Chapter 2 requirements for effective schools programs a 3.9 mean rating of importance (on a 1- to 5-point scale) as a reason for initiating state support for school-based reform.

[a] Data pertain to the program or programs that were the primary focus of the state telephone survey.

[b] Mean ratings are based on a 5-point scale, where 5 = extremely important, 4 = very important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = somewhat important, and 1 = not at all important. (Midpoint is 3.0.) Reasons are ordered by mean ratings.

[c] Pre-'88 and post-'88 refer to the year the school-based reform began.

Source: State telephone survey.

Although these data point to the influence of Chapter 2, we should not overstate the law's effect on state and local improvement efforts. First, state telephone survey data reflect the program or programs in the state that respondents chose to focus on in our interviews. Although these programs generally reflected the program in the state most specifically targeted on school-based reform, the structured interview generally did not capture all reform efforts in the state. Consequently, we cannot conclude that Chapter 2 was the primary reason that states initiated all their reform activities after 1988. The limits of Chapter 2 influence are also reflected in data from the district survey. As we pointed out in the second chapter of this report (Table 18, page 37),

districts reported that Chapter 2 was relatively less important than local conditions, local mandates, and other reasons in initiating these programs. Thus, despite evident correlations between the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments and shifts in state actions, we cannot isolate the effect of Chapter 2 from these data.

Table 31

MAJOR CHANGES IN STATE USE OF CHAPTER 2 FUNDS INFLUENCED BY THE 1988 HAWKINS-STAFFORD AMENDMENTS[a]

Type of Change	Percentage of States Citing Change
New emphasis on effective schools	54
Initiated activities in targeted areas	44
New emphasis on technical assistance for districts	20
Shift away from "strengthening activities"	20
Aligned staff assignments and funding of positions with Chapter 2 requirements	17
Increased grants to locals	15
Discontinued funding programs not related to effective schools	15
Shift away from state administration	7
Discontinued supplanting	2

Table reads: Of the 41 states responding to an open-ended prompt asking about major changes in their use of Chapter 2 funds influenced by the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments, 54 percent cited a new emphasis on effective schools.

[a] Data were available from 46 states. Of these, 41 wrote in at least one type of change.

Source: State mail survey.

This same general pattern of an important but limited effect on school reform activities is reflected in the data from the state case studies. For example, in California, the state uses Chapter 2 funds, among other purposes, to fund its grade-level task forces (elementary, middle school, and high school). These highly visible committees play a central role in rethinking all curricular areas and in the grade levels under their purview. The recent report of the high school task force, "Second to None," has already had a great influence on changing secondary schools around the state. Clearly, Chapter 2 is supporting a significant reform activity in the state. At the same time, however, there are a number of other school improvement efforts in California that

function independently of the federal program—including a key restructuring initiative supporting comprehensive school-based change in a number of schools around the state.

Connecticut and Washington State illustrate similar reactions to the Chapter 2 legislation. Both states use Chapter 2 to support important statewide improvement efforts. Yet both states' central school-based reform initiatives (Schools for the 21st Century in Washington State and the Connecticut Effective Schools process) are funded from state sources. In South Dakota, by contrast, Chapter 2 funds the entire state effective schools effort—but the program began in 1987, a year before the federal mandate came into effect.

Kentucky provides a more mixed story of the relationship between Chapter 2 and state reform efforts. In the late 1980s and in the absence of other targeted schoolwide reform efforts, Kentucky initiated an effective schools program in direct response to the federal Chapter 2 requirements. The state trained and supported dozens of school districts and a large number of schools to rethink their educational programs by following the effective schools model.

During this same period, as we have described above, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) went into effect, prompting much more sweeping and radical changes. In the wake of KERA, the state's effective schools effort moved much lower on the reform agenda. Still, the group of schools that received effective schools training has since formed a formal network to provide ongoing communication and assistance to members working to rebuild their schools following the effective schools model. Moreover, because of this earlier experience, the state has adopted the effective schools model as one of the improvement options it will offer to poorly performing schools. At the local level, schools and districts have continued to look to the effective schools process as a way of helping them to cope with the many state-directed changes.

Federal Funds and Support for Reform

As the case studies attest, in addition to the specific Chapter 2 mandates, the availability of funds has been an important factor in supporting reform efforts. For example, more states rely on Chapter 2 monies to support state-level reform activities than on any other source (see Table 29, page 117). In addition, almost half of all school districts receive state Chapter 2 funds to support school-based reform activities. Almost one-third use their own Chapter 2 funds for this purpose (Table 29). Significantly, other federal sources (most notably Chapter 1) are key methods of support for local reforms. On average, district reform agendas/effective schools programs receive 13.4 percent of their funding from Chapter 2. As a percentage of Chapter 2 expenditures at the state level, effective schools programs account for the largest share: 26 percent (Table 32). This

fact is explained partly by the Chapter 2 effective schools spending requirement. It is important to note, however, that states—on average—have exceeded the 20 percent minimum for support.

Table 32 also shows expenditures for other program categories that are related to school-based reform. In addition to effective schools, state Chapter 2 support for professional development, schoolwide improvement, and school climate and educational programs has the potential to foster school-based reform. The aggregate mean of these program categories as a portion of Chapter 2 state expenditures is 57 percent.

Table 32

STATE CHAPTER 2 EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM CATEGORY (1990-91)[a]

Program Category	Mean Expenditure	Mean Percentage of Total
Effective schools	$ 411,187	26
Professional development	243,435	15
At-risk/high-cost students	237,133	10
Chapter 2 administration	232,323	16
Schoolwide improvement	174,996	7
School climate and educational programs	139,066	9
Personal excellence and student achievement	102,337	6
Instructional materials	70,548	6
Other	58,905	4
Total	$1,676,820	

Table reads: On average, states spent $411,187, or 26 percent, of the Chapter 2 state dollars to support effective schools programs.

[a]Data were available from 46 states.

Source: State mail survey.

The Evolving Federal Role

Although the federal government exercises virtually no direct control over education in the states, it plays key leadership and support roles in helping state and local educators to pursue improvement efforts. In this role, federal policy makers, like their state counterparts, need to balance ongoing support for reform efforts with the need to allow states, districts, and schools sufficient autonomy.

The 1988 Chapter 2 program appears to have struck this balance. Clearly, the availability of federal Chapter 2 dollars as a marginal resource for states has allowed them to pursue promising reforms that they might not have tried otherwise. Moreover, there is a set of states that initiated support for school-based reform directly as a result of the Chapter 2 mandate—Kentucky (in 1988) being an example.

The data from this study suggest that continued support for a range of school-based reforms, through the Chapter 2 program or another legislated program, is fully justified. Yet, in light of the evolution of school-based reform since the late 1980s, and as more states become increasingly active in the reform arena (as did Kentucky), it makes sense for federal policy makers to reconsider the strictness of the Chapter 2 requirement for state support of effective schools programs. For example, the definition of "effective schools programs" might be broadened to include other forms of school-based reform. Finally, the study findings suggest the importance of continued federal support, through Chapter 2 and other programs (e.g., the Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Program), for professional development and local capacity building.*

* As modified and renamed in the Improving America's Schools Act (U.S. Congress, 1994b), the Chapter 2 program (now Title VI: Innovative Education Program Strategies) relaxes the state effective schools requirement and adds the objective of "promoting school-level planning, instructional improvement, and staff development" (Sec. 6003, p. 199) to the definition of "effective schools programs." This legislation also renews federal support for professional development, specifically in connection with Title I (Sec. 1119) and the expanded Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program (Title II).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The current education reform movement has focused increasingly on the promise of improvement efforts located and controlled at the school site. This focus reflects a combination of policy makers' frustrations with the limits of top-down reform efforts and a growing awareness of two decades of research pinpointing school-level characteristics that are consistently associated with student success. In this document, we have reviewed our findings from a national study of such school-based reforms, with a special interest in reforms following the effective schools model. We have used a broad definition of school-based reform that encompasses school-site improvement efforts designed to develop schoolwide capacity for problem solving, to improve teaching, and to increase student learning.

In this summary chapter, we first describe our findings on the extent and nature of school-based reform—how common such efforts are and what they look like. From this description, we point to a set of characteristics common to promising reform strategies. Next, we outline the school, district, state, and federal conditions that support promising reforms. We then draw overall conclusions about the relationships among the different levels of the education system as a context for reform.

Extent and Nature of School-Based Reform

Administrators from a survey of a nationally representative sample of school districts report that school-based reform is widespread—somewhere from a fifth to two-thirds of districts reported having schools involved in reform efforts. The exact number depends on the definition of reform we use. For example, 40 percent of districts reported that their most comprehensive school-based reform effort met the above definition of focusing on increasing student learning, improving teaching, and developing schoolwide planning and problem-solving capacity. Only 18 percent reported that their reform effort met all seven of the effective schools criteria contained in the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments (P.L. 100-297).

These findings from the survey data are consistent with many education observers' perception of the growing popularity of school-based approaches to reform. Yet the case studies suggest that these incidence data likely overstate the extent of reforms involving significant school-level changes. Moreover, the survey data mask broad variation across schools and districts. To illustrate these differences, we have provided a series of portraits of reforms. These

vignettes portray the unique characteristics of each case—reflecting the goals, needs, and resources of particular districts and schools.

The case studies provide examples of the limitations of some school-based reform efforts, in which reform translates into little more than changes in teachers' routines and meeting times. The survey data show that nearly a fifth of schools reported to be involved in reforms do not even target classroom instruction and curricula for improvement. Yet we also provide descriptions of other sites in which school-based reform has involved fundamental changes in the daily lives of people in school, offering new opportunities for professional growth while placing greater demands on staff time, skills, and knowledge.

In our best examples of school reform, teachers and administrators have both seized these opportunities and met these demands, resulting in changed attitudes toward students, changed classroom practices, and new learning opportunities for students. Across these sites, we noticed increased emphasis on students' acquiring skills in reasoning and critical thinking. There was also a trend toward less tracking of students across and within classrooms and a concurrent expansion of experimentation with cooperative learning arrangements.

The data from this study do not allow us to assess the effects of such practices on students directly, although there is a growing body of literature from other research that suggests that these kinds of classroom-level changes have a high potential for positive effects on student learning (e.g., Means et al., 1991; Knapp et al., 1992). We argue, then, that schools adopting such practices are promising examples of school-based reform. The data from the case study sites suggest that such schools often share a set of other characteristics:

- a clear focus on creating more challenging learning experiences for all students (with clear implications for student equity);
- a school culture in which teachers work collaboratively and have a voice in decisions that directly affect their ability to improve classroom practice; and
- opportunities for teachers (and administrators) to gain knowledge and build their professional capacity in subject matter areas, classroom pedagogy, and decision-making strategies.

Not surprisingly, these components of promising reform—focus on learning, a collaborative culture, and opportunities for professional capacity building—reflect many of the themes from the effective schools research. Yet, they also represent an evolution of thinking about school-based

reform, elevating discourse beyond basic skills and focusing more on the ongoing professional development teachers need to create more challenging learning environments.

Conditions Supporting Promising Reform Efforts

Given the existence of promising reform efforts, what conditions—at the school, district, state, and federal levels—support (or inhibit) these reforms? What can school principals, district administrators, and state and local policy makers do to ensure the progress of reforms? We address these issues for each level of the system separately.

Building a Culture of Improvement at the School Level

Leadership that provides a clear vision of success, energizes the staff, garners necessary resources, and is able to keep the school focused on its goal over time, is imperative for schools to proceed with reform efforts. Although by the nature of their positions, principals are most likely to lead school reforms, we had numerous cases of teacher-led improvement efforts.

Even when leadership is the sole province of a strong principal, the continued progress of school-level reform depends on the involvement of all (or most) of the school staff—in developing the goals of the improvement effort, in decisions about how to meet those goals, and in deliberations about how to change classroom practice. Our findings do not suggest that such involvement has to include decision-making authority, but generally we found teachers to be more involved and committed to reforms when they have a sense of ownership resulting from active participation in the decision-making process.

Assuming more active roles in the life of the school typically requires staff—teachers especially—to obtain new knowledge and skills. To help define reform goals and to devise plans to meet those goals calls for skills on how to work and plan collaboratively. Considering, planning for, and experimenting with alternative instructional approaches also calls for access to new ideas and methods in curriculum and instruction. To progress with reforms, schools have to find ways to meet these demands, which often means finding resources to pay for staff planning time, professional training, and new materials.

These school-level factors—leadership, access to appropriate knowledge and skills, opportunities to participate in decision making, and external resources and support—combine to create a culture of change and possibility aimed at improved student learning.

District Leadership and Support

Like school leaders, district-level educators can do much to forge a new vision of what schools should look like and what students should know. In fact, in many of the schools we visited, reform was initially catalyzed by leaders at the district level who sought to improve teaching and learning throughout the district. Regardless of the catalyst for the reform, however, district offices can offer a broad professional forum for staff from various schools to talk through the advantages and disadvantages of alternative approaches to reform.

Similarly, district staff can serve as a clearinghouse for new ideas and are often in better position than their school-level colleagues to provide professional development, technical assistance, and resources that teachers and principals need to move forward with their reforms. District staff are also able to shield schools from outside forces and requirements that could impede change efforts. Districts, for example, can negotiate with state education department staff regarding the waiving of requirements, can channel community political differences into appropriate venues, and can negotiate with teachers' unions.

The specific ways in which districts can best support school-based reform depends on the fit between district and school goals, on the needs of school staff, and on the capacity of the district. In some cases, districts may prove most helpful by remaining passive and allowing strong and motivated school staff to pursue their own visions of reform. But overall we found that the odds that long-term reforms would succeed are better in districts that actively encourage and support these reforms. Conversely, active districts can do much to impede school-level change. By strictly interpreting state and federal regulations, insisting on uniformity across schools, and refusing to provide school staff with sufficient authority, central office officials can thwart the progress of reforms.

State Leadership and Support

State-level actors are especially well situated to exert leadership in reform efforts by coalescing public opinion around a clearly articulated vision of better schooling. In each of the case study states, the major reform initiatives can be traced to the efforts of top officials (generally the governor or state superintendent) who rallied public support and, by so doing, was able to harness the resources necessary to move reform forward.

Our analyses also suggest that states can effectively use this vision to design activities that build local capacity to carry out reforms. Of particular importance is the provision of professional development and technical assistance. States are well positioned to create and fund various

methods of helping school (and district) staff to participate more productively in the change process. In states like California and Connecticut, teachers praised the availability of ongoing opportunities for professional development—particularly in the content areas. For some issues—creating a new performance-based assessment instrument, for example—the states are the only entities with sufficient capacity.

Finally, in supporting reform, states need to find an appropriate balance between guiding reform through goal setting and support, on the one hand, and mandating school and district actions, on the other. How much authority should schools have over textbooks? Under what circumstances might state categorical dollars be used to serve all students in a school? How should the state hold schools accountable for results? There are clearly no right answers—the "best" state role will inevitably differ from state to state.

The Federal Role

Our study findings underscore the important, although clearly limited, role the federal government plays in supporting school-based reform. Besides its leadership in helping to form a national consensus in favor of reform, the federal government has been influential through the 1988 Chapter 2 program. The availability of Chapter 2 funds has made a number of state and local reform efforts possible, and the mandate in the federal law that states spend a portion of their funds on effective schools programs has encouraged some states to develop reform efforts they probably would not have in the absence of such a requirement.

Like states and districts, the federal government has to balance ongoing support for reform with the need to allow states, districts, and schools sufficient autonomy. The Chapter 2 program appears to have struck this balance over the past few years. The study findings suggest that, given the propensity of state and local educators to move toward school-based reform and given their needs for professional development resources, including release time for teachers, any federal resource that provides marginal and relatively flexible funds to support reform and training—as Chapter 2 does—would prove useful to states and districts.

Renegotiating Traditional Roles to Promote School-Based Reform

From these findings on the nature of school-based reform and the conditions that support it, two central themes emerge. First, we have learned that reform is an ongoing process, not a set of discrete activities. Rather than a program that can be planned, implemented, and institutionalized,

reform involves the evolution of a set of beliefs, an ongoing system for building the capacity to solve problems, and a new way of interaction among individuals and groups.

Second, and as a result of its process-oriented nature, reform involves a delicate balance between top-down and bottom-up strategies. We found nothing to support an approach in which reforms are developed by high-level policy makers and mandated through the system. In contrast, we have argued the opposite: that reform agendas are advanced when principals share authority with teachers, districts provide schools with greater autonomy, and state and federal policy makers craft policies that provide local educators with flexibility. Interestingly, these strategies are consistent with research on promising classroom practices that provide for more student-directed learning and less teacher control of instruction (Means et al., 1991).

In making this argument, however, we do not imply that reform is always a bottom-up process in which visions of new schools appear spontaneously to local teachers and administrators once they are unfettered from the mandates of higher levels of government. Rather, our findings suggest that the appropriate balance among levels of the system depends on the specific characteristics of the context of reform—the timing of the change effort, the practice targeted by the reform, and the capacity of the different actors and institutions. As such, the appropriate relationships may need to be regularly negotiated to meet context-dependent needs.

From this perspective, we gain a more complex understanding of what policy makers and practitioners can do to support reform through leadership, building capacity, and changing authority relations.

In terms of leadership, we have learned that higher-level individuals (e.g., principals rather than teachers, state commissioners rather than district superintendents) are generally better situated to communicate a vision of school change to their constituents. And as we have emphasized in previous chapters, the strategic use of the bully pulpit can spark the energy needed to improve schooling. Yet for reform to succeed, that vision has to be adopted and adapted at every level of the system, down to the classroom. Leadership and vision, in the end, must infuse everyone involved in the reform process. The content-driven reform efforts in California illustrate the difficulties of achieving this end. Since the mid-1980s, the state has articulated clear goals for student learning in mathematics, and these goals have been incorporated into curricular frameworks, curricular guides, and textbook adoption policies. Yet, studies of classroom practice in mathematics show that many teachers have failed to get the message, leading to instructional strategies inconsistent with state goals (Cohen & Ball, 1990).

Professional capacity building provides another example of the need for an evolving and balanced approach to supporting reform. Throughout this report, we have pointed to the need for new knowledge and skills generated by the demands of reform. And we have noted that higher-level institutions (e.g., districts rather than schools) are well positioned to harness resources and bring together expertise. For example, we have stressed that districts can serve as forums for the discussion and dissemination of ideas on reform, and that only states have the capacity to create (or pay for the creation of) new assessment instruments. Yet, as with leadership, it is imperative that local educators develop their own systems for getting access to knowledge and developing skills—knowledge and skills that may be specific to their context and that will inevitably change as reforms progress. Such systems must be ongoing, flexible, and teacher driven, a radical departure from the traditional one-time staff development workshop. The case studies provide examples of such efforts: networks of teachers in California, local professional development academies and training consortia in Kentucky, and veteran/rookie teacher teams in Connecticut.

The issue of balance arises directly in terms of authority relations: what and how should higher levels of government mandate reforms through the system? The answer depends on which level of government one is concerned about. The analyses suggest two general guidelines for considering mandates. First, mandates and requirements should be tied clearly to learning goals. In California, for example, policy makers defend their textbook adoption policy—no school can be reimbursed for texts not formally approved by the state—as the only feasible way to ensure both the availability of texts that adequately meet the state's learning goals and the presence of these texts in classrooms.

Second, mandates should respect the variability of schools, districts, and states. The federal Chapter 2 requirement under the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments for states to spend a portion of their funds on effective schools programs illustrates a policy that is sensitive to such differences. The law specifically allowed for this requirement to be waived for states that were already supporting such programs. As a result, the law treated Connecticut, with a long-standing effective schools program, differently than Kentucky, which at that time (1987-88) had no coherent program for supporting school-based reform.

At the state level, there are also times when state policy makers would be wise to approach districts with some flexibility. For example, we found some schools that had been successfully involved in school-based decision making for a number of years struggling to rearrange (and so disrupt) their school councils to meet the letter of the Kentucky state requirements.

Finally, in considering support for school-based reform, the study findings point to the importance of coherence among district, state, and/or federal policies. Teachers and principals in the study schools faced their greatest difficulty when confronted with contradictory or incomplete policies. For example, in California, state assessment has not caught up with curricular reforms; whereas in Kentucky assessment policies have outpaced what is available for many schools in terms of text and curricula. Our findings, consistent with other research (e.g., Smith & O'Day, 1991), support the argument that reform strategies should align curricular, assessment, and professional development policies with a vision of challenging learning goals for all students.

Overall, then, the study suggests a vision of school-based reform as a dynamic, evolving process. In support of this process, educators and policy makers can best work to instill a vision of improved schooling, help build local capacity to acquire new skills and knowledge, and develop coherent policies that encourage reform while providing sufficient flexibility for local educators to devise strategies that meet local needs.

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Appendix A

STUDY METHOD AND SAMPLE

Appendix A

STUDY METHOD AND SAMPLE

In this appendix, we provide detail regarding sources of data, samples, and data collection procedures.

Overview of Data Sources

The study involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from surveys, case studies, and reviews of documents. Specifically, the study data sources consisted of:

(1) **State Telephone Survey.** This telephone survey elicited descriptive data on state support for effective schools programs and other state-level education reform initiatives. We conducted surveys of 51 state education agencies (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico).

(2) **State Survey of Chapter 2.** We also distributed a short mail survey to state Chapter 2 coordinators in order to collect data on states' administration of the Chapter 2 program. Of the 52 states receiving surveys, 47 responded.

(3) **District Survey.** We surveyed a nationally representative sample of local education agencies, gathering information on district support for school-based reform. We also collected information on the initiation, design, implementation, and evaluation of these reforms. Of the 2,030 districts in the sample, 1,555 (76.6 percent) responded.

(4) **State Case Studies.** We visited five states (California, Connecticut, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Washington) and conducted in-depth studies of state reform efforts. We used this information to describe and explain state efforts to help local districts and schools to develop and implement state reforms and effective schools programs.

(5) **District/School Case Studies.** Within our sample states, we also conducted case studies of 16 local districts and 32 schools (2 in each district). We looked closely at school change efforts under way in each case study district, analyzing the development, implementation, and results of each one.

Samples and Data Collection

The Surveys

All three surveys were fielded in fall 1991 and elicited information for the 1990-91 school year. Portions of the telephone survey and the district survey referred to prior years. The telephone survey also sought information about the 1991-92 school year. Copies of all three of these instruments appear in Appendix B.

State Telephone Survey

Sample: All 52 states (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico).

Response rate: 98 percent (51 states).

The telephone survey gathered systematic data on state reform efforts. This information included program history and goals, administration, types of state support (staff development, technical assistance), funding, evaluation, and state context. Respondents varied, but always consisted of individuals with detailed knowledge of state reforms and related programs.

State Chapter 2 Survey

Sample: All 52 states (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico).

Response rate: 90 percent (47 states).

This survey was sent to state Chapter 2 coordinators to compile information on state Chapter 2 fund allocation, decision making, and use of Chapter 2 funds to support effective schools programs and other reforms.

District Survey

Sample: 2,030 districts.

Response rate: 76.6 percent (1,555 districts).

A stratified random sample of 2,030 districts was chosen to statistically represent the full range of school districts in the nation. The sampling frame was defined by two variables: district enrollment and district wealth as indicated by the Orshansky percentile. The sampling frame is shown in Exhibit A-1, along with ratios of respondents to the population in each cell.

Exhibit A-1

SAMPLING FRAME FOR THE DISTRICT SURVEY OF SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

District Size[a]	District Poverty Level[b] Low (< 10%)	Medium (10-19%)	High (≥ 20%)	Total
All districts				
Population N	5,134	5,173	3,531	13,838
Sample n	817	782	431	2,030
Respondents	607	620	328	1,555
Ratio of respondents to population	1:8	1:8	1:11	1:9
Very large (≥ 25,000)				
Population N	47	80	60	187
Sample n	47	80	60	187
Respondents	29	51	40	120
Ratio of respondents to population	1:1.6	1:1.6	1:1.5	1:1.6
Large (10,000-24,999)				
Population N	198	201	92	491
Sample n	198	201	92	491
Respondents	145	164	65	374
Ratio of respondents to population	1:1.4	1:1.2	1:1.4	1:1.3
Medium (2,500-9,999)				
Population N	1,314	970	581	2,865
Sample n	329	242	125	696
Respondents	255	195	102	552
Ratio of respondents to population	1:5	1:5	1:6	1:5
Small (1,000-2,499)				
Population N	1,516	1,384	643	3,543
Sample n	150	139	65	354
Respondents	105	108	59	272
Ratio of respondents to population	1:14	1:13	1:11	1:13
Very small (< 1,000)				
Population N	2,059	2,538	2,155	6.752
Sample n	93	120	89	302
Respondents	73	102	62	237
Ratio of respondents to population	1:28	1:25	1:35	1:28

[a]Student enrollment.

[b]Orshansky percentile.

We wanted to ensure that our district sample represented a range of enrollment sizes. All districts with student enrollments above 10,000 were sampled, along with proportionally smaller numbers of smaller districts. A strictly random sample would have included mostly small districts that represent relatively few programs and students. District size cutoffs are as follows:

- Very large districts (25,000 students or more)
- Large districts (10,000 - 24,999 students)
- Medium districts (2,500 - 9,999)
- Small districts (1,000 - 2,499)
- Very small districts (1 - 999)

Districts were also divided into three groups on the basis of poverty level. We measured poverty with the Orshansky percentile, which indicates the percentile ranking of the community served by each school district on the basis of the proportion of families falling below the federally determined poverty line. Low-poverty districts are defined as those with an Orshansky percentile less than 10. Districts with Orshansky percentiles of 10-19 are defined as the medium poverty range. High-poverty districts are defined as those with Orshansky percentiles of 20 or greater.

The district survey concentrated on change efforts defined as Pre-K to 12 school-level programs concentrating on all of the following:

- Building schoolwide capacity for planning and decision making
- Improving teaching
- Increasing learning for all students

The survey asked for information on district support for school-based reform, characteristics of the most comprehensive building-level reform effort, and the development and evaluation of this program.

Finally, districts were invited to submit evaluations of their reform programs if these evaluations were already available in written form. SRI received 100 of these local evaluations. Because of variation in quality and the nonrepresentative nature of the districts returning evaluations, we chose not to use this information in our analysis.

The Precision of Estimates in the District Sample

Ignoring stratification, the responding sample was sufficiently large to estimate parameters to within +/- 3 percent of the true population value, at the .05 level of confidence. We note, however, that the actual precision of estimates used in the analysis can vary somewhat, depending on the precise set of cases included in each analysis.

The Case Studies

State Case Studies

Sample: Five states (California, Connecticut, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Washington).

The state sample was chosen to represent the range of school reform strategies from traditional, correlate-driven effective schools programs to major restructuring. The sample also captures variation on state roles and involvement with these reform strategies. These roles range from relatively passive (Century 21 grants in Washington) to almost complete state direction (court-ordered restructuring mandates and court orders in Kentucky).

Data Collection Procedures. Each sample state was visited for 2-3 days by one or two members of the study team. In some cases, there were also follow-up meetings with state respondents. Pertinent documents were gathered and reviewed in advance of the visit.

The primary goal of the state case studies was to describe state support for school reform and effective schools activities. We also explored the effects of these activities on local reform efforts. Specifically, we gathered data on:

- The state education context.
- An overview of state education reform, school change, and effective schools activities.
- History of the state's programs for school-based reform.
- Current status of state efforts.
- Role of federal funds and requirements.
- Effects of state efforts

Data collection on-site consisted mostly of semistructured interviews and review of additional relevant documents. The exact list of interview respondents varied from site to site, but usually consisted of the following state education agency personnel:

- Director of state-level reform initiative(s).
- Director of state effective schools program.
- Director of federal programs.
- Coordinator of the Chapter 2 program.
- Staff in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction involved in the state reform efforts.
- Consultants in the Chapter 2 office who monitor or provide technical assistance on school change to districts.
- Evaluation personnel familiar with federal programs and state school reform initiatives.
- Representatives of the Chapter 2 steering committee

The state case studies enabled us to assemble a picture of the range of state reform strategies. In addition, because our case study districts were located within the five states and were sampled partly on the basis of their participation in state-level programs, individual state case studies were important for understanding the state environment within which these districts operated.

District/School Case Studies

Sample: Sixteen districts and 32 schools. Three districts were located in each state (four in California). The district sample as a whole was selected to represent demographic variation (urban, suburban, and rural; high, medium, and low poverty). Variation was also sought with respect to the following dimensions:

- Stage of implementation
- Source of innovation
- Funding source
- Percentage minority enrollment

Data Collection Procedures. Districts were typically visited by two researchers for an average of 4 days (8 person-days on-site). As with the state case study visits, background materials were collected and examined before the site visit. We also sought background information from state respondents during the sampling phase and state visits. By gathering various types of information in advance, we were able to select our case study schools and establish rapport with school principals before going on-site.

The primary purpose of the local case studies was to describe school-based reform at the school level and the role of districts in supporting (or inhibiting) those programs. At the district level, we investigated the following topics:

- The local education context
- An overview of district change efforts and effective schools activities
- History of local educational reform programs
- Current status of district efforts
- Impact of these activities
- Role of federal funds and requirements

At the school level, we were interested in:

- School background
- History of school involvement in reform
- Original structure of effective schools program and other reform efforts
- Implementation process
- Current status of reforms
- School-level impact

Data collection activities consisted of semistructured interviews, review of record documents, and informal observation of team planning meetings and relevant school and classroom processes. In most cases, interview respondents included:

At the district level:

- District superintendent
- Assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction
- Director of staff development
- Director of state and federal programs
- Local evaluation personnel
- Other relevant district staff or key players (e.g., outside consultants)

At the school level:

- Principal
- Assistant principal for curriculum (secondary only)
- Counselors (secondary only)
- Teachers (at least four per school)
- Parents

We found school and district documents to be an important source of information about the initiation and implementation of planned change in our case study districts. The following are examples of the background records we collected in advance of and during our case study visits:

- Local Chapter 2 applications, evaluation reports, and monitoring documents
- Local demographic information and district vital statistics
- Minutes of planning meetings for building-level teams working on school reform
- The results and description of needs assessment
- Applications for external funding

Finally, to supplement the interviews and review of records, we conducted a number of informal observations of school planning team meetings, staff development workshops, and classroom processes. These supplemental observations were not systematic across sites.

Appendix B

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

OMB # 1810-0556
[Expiration Date 11/30/93]

October 25, 1991

Dear Colleague:

SRI International, under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, is conducting a nationwide study of effective schools programs. The study has been mandated by the Congress.

For the purpose of this study, "effective schools programs" involve building schoolwide capacity for planning and decisionmaking, improving teaching, and increasing learning for all students. In this questionnaire, we ask for information about district support for effective schools programs and specific information about the ***most comprehensive*** effective schools program in the district.

The questionnaire should be filled out by the person at the ***district*** level who is most familiar with effective schools programs. If that individual is different from the person to whom the survey packet was sent, please forward the packet to him/her and return the enclosed postcard to SRI so that we can conduct follow-up activities with the appropriate individual.

Your district is part of a randomly drawn national sample of school districts. Although your participation is voluntary, it is very important to the accuracy of the survey to obtain a high level of response from members of the survey group. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Please complete this questionnaire as soon as possible and return it directly to SRI in the enclosed business-reply envelope. If you have any questions or comments concerning this study, please telephone Dr. Joan Ruskus at SRI International, (415) 859-5629.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

J. Ruskus

Joan Ruskus
Study of Effective Schools Programs: Their Implementation and Success

SRI International
333 Ravenswood Ave • Menlo Park, CA 94025 • (415) 326-6200 • TWX 910-373-2046 • Telex 334486 • Facsimile (415) 326-5512

LEA SURVEY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

This questionnaire asks about district support for effective schools programs and characteristics of the most comprehensive effective schools program in the district. Before you begin to answer the questions, please read the definition of effective schools programs given below and review the directions.

DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

For the purpose of this study, "effective schools programs" are school-level programs (prekindergarten to 12th grade) that focus on ***all*** of the following:

- Building schoolwide capacity for planning and decisionmaking.
- Improving teaching.
- Increasing learning for all students.

Here is an example of such a program:

> Jefferson Elementary participates in a districtwide program that is committed to increasing the academic achievement of its students. The district provides release time and technical assistance that enable school staff to evaluate their school's needs and to devise and implement strategies to meet those needs. In the first year, school staff have focused their efforts on coordinating curriculum and instruction across grade levels in order to increase student achievement.

DIRECTIONS:

☞ Please read all questions and instructions carefully. Answer the questions by circling the appropriate number or writing in the answer, if requested to do so. It is important that you limit your response to ***one*** alternative for questions that direct you to "***CIRCLE ONE***."

☞ In answering questions requiring a dollar amount or a percentage, please provide the most accurate data available. If you are unsure about a figure, give your best ***single*** estimate. Please write in "0" if your answer means "none." Do not leave any lines blank.

☞ Unless otherwise noted, questions refer to the 1990-91 school year.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 45 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, Information Management and Compliance Division, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651; and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project 1810-0556, Washington, D.C. 20503 (Expires 11/30/93).

A. District Support for Effective Schools Programs

1a. How many of each of the following kinds of public schools were there in this district as of Fall 1990?

1b. How many of each of the following kinds of public schools were there in this district that had ***any kind*** of effective schools program in operation in Fall 1990, as defined above?

	(a) Total Number of Public Schools Fall 1990	(b) Number of Public Schools with Effective Schools Programs Fall 1990
(1) Prekindergarten or kindergarten (if separate from elementary school)	_____	_____
(2) Elementary	_____	_____
(3) Intermediate/middle/junior high	_____	_____
(4) High school	_____	_____
(5) Alternative schools	_____	_____
(6) TOTAL IN DISTRICT, AT ALL LEVELS	_____	_____

PLEASE NOTE:

If there are NO effective schools programs in the district, please skip to Section C on page 13 of the questionnaire.

2. During the ***1990-91*** school year, which of the following kinds of funds were used by the district to support effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Local Chapter 2 funds	1	
State Chapter 2 funds	2	
Chapter 1 funds	3	
Other federal funds	4	
Regular district budget	5	
Specially earmarked state funds (e.g., a grant)	6	
Other source—please specify: _____	7	
The district did not provide funding for effective schools programs	0	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 5
Don't know	8	

3. What was the total amount spent by the district to support effective schools programs in 1990-91? Do ***not*** include regular district allocations (e.g., teachers' salaries, materials and supplies). *(PLEASE ENTER YOUR BEST ESTIMATE. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE A NUMBER, PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR "DON'T KNOW")*

   Total funding: $ _____ [ ] Don't know

4. Of this total amount, what ***percentage*** came from Chapter 2 funds? *(PLEASE ENTER YOUR BEST ESTIMATE. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE A PERCENTAGE, PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR "DON'T KNOW")*

   Percentage of total funding: _____ % [ ] Don't know

5. How many district staff (i.e., central office staff) were assigned to support effective schools programs in 1990-91? *(PLEASE REPORT DISTRICT STAFF IN FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS BY JOB CLASSIFICATION TO THE NEAREST HALF. ENTER "0" IF NO DISTRICT STAFF WERE ASSIGNED)*

	FTEs
(a) Professional staff	_____
(b) Support staff (nonclerical)	_____
(c) Clerical staff	_____
(d) Other	_____

6. Which of the following best describes the position of the person or the name of the group who has overall responsibility for the administration of effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

District Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent	01
Chapter 2 Coordinator	02
Other federal program coordinator (e.g., Chapter 1 Coordinator)	03
Other district administrator	04
Principal	05
Other school administrator	06
Teacher	07
Building-level team	08
Other—please specify: _____	09
Don't know	98

7. Did the district provide staff development for teachers or administrators (or provide funding for staff development) for the purpose of initiating or implementing effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes	1	
No	2	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 15
Don't know	8	

8. Who initiated the staff development? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

District staff	1
School administrators	2
Teachers	3
Other —please describe: _____	4
Don't know	8

9. How was the staff development provided? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

On-site at the schools	1
On-site at the district	2
Out-of-district (e.g., conferences)	3
Other —please describe: _____	4
Don't know	8

10. Did the district conduct follow-up activities after staff development had been provided? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

11. Was staff development provided to ***teachers*** for the purpose of initiating or implementing effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes	1	
No	2	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 13
Don't know	8	

12a. Which of the following topics were addressed in the staff development that ***teachers*** received? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

12b. What topic was addressed ***most often*** in the staff development that ***teachers*** received? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

	(a) Topic Was Addressed	(b) Topic Most Often Addressed
Background on school improvement or effective schools programs	01	01
Schoolwide planning	02	02
Shared decisionmaking	03	03
Instructional leadership	04	04
Effective instruction	05	05
Working with special student populations	06	06
Parent involvement	07	07
Alternative forms of assessment	08	08
Other	09	09
Don't know	98	98

13. Was staff development provided to ***school administrators*** for the purpose of initiating or implementing effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes	1	
No	2	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 15
Don't know	8	

14a. Which of the following topics were addressed in the staff development that ***school administrators*** received? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

14b. What topic was addressed ***most often*** in the staff development that ***administrators*** received? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

	(a) Topic Was Addressed	(b) Topic Most Often Addressed
Background on school improvement or effective schools programs	01	01
Schoolwide planning	02	02
Shared decisionmaking	03	03
Instructional leadership	04	04
Effective instruction	05	05
Working with special student populations	06	06
Parent involvement	07	07
Alternative forms of assessment	08	08
Other	09	09
Don't know	98	98

15. Has the district given more authority than usual to school staff for the purpose of facilitating effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes	1	
No	2	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 17
Don't know	8	

16. On what kinds of issues do the school staff now have more authority for the purpose of facilitating effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Hiring/firing school personnel	01
Staff assignments	02
Staff development	03
School schedule	04
Selection of curriculum and materials	05
Student assessment	06
School budget	07
Organization of supplemental programs (e.g., Chapter 1)	08
Other—please specify: _____	09
Don't know	98

17. Has the district granted waivers to schools or assisted schools in obtaining waivers to facilitate effective schools programs?

> Example: Releasing a school from the requirement that a minimum number of hours be spent per week on mathematics so that a new approach to teaching mathematics can be implemented.

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)

Yes	1	
No	2	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 19
Don't know	8	

18. From what type(s) of requirements were waivers granted? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

State requirements	1
District requirements	2
Union/contract requirements	3
Other—please specify: _____	4
Don't know	8

19. Which of the following, if any, has the district done for the purpose of facilitating effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Provided additional release time for school staff	1
Developed partnerships with community groups	2
Communicated with SEA on behalf of the program	3
Other—please specify: _____	4
The district has done nothing special to facilitate effective schools programs	0
Don't know	8

B. Characteristics of the Most Comprehensive Effective Schools Program

PLEASE NOTE:

The questions that follow ask you about ONE effective schools program in the district. Please think about the program that you consider to be the most comprehensive effective schools program at the BUILDING (i.e., school) level. Please select a program that has been operational for at least ONE YEAR as of Fall 1991.

20. What is the name of the effective schools program that you have selected for the purpose of this survey?

_____
(program name)

Please check here [ ] if the program has no name.

*PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO **THIS** PROGRAM AND **ONLY THIS** PROGRAM. WE WILL REFER TO THIS PROGRAM AS "THIS EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM."*

21. At which schooling level(s) is this effective schools program implemented? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Prekindergarten or kindergarten (if separate from elementary school)	1
Elementary	2
Intermediate/middle/junior high	3
High school	4
Alternative school	5
Other—please specify: _____	6
Don't know	8

22. Did (or will) this effective schools program address any of the following areas during:

(a) The 1989-90 school year?

(b) The 1990-91 school year?

(c) The 1991-92 school year?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH AREA AND EACH SCHOOL YEAR)

	(a) Area Was Addressed in 1989-90			(b) Area Was Addressed in 1990-91			(c) Area Will Be Addressed in 1991-92		
	Yes	No	Have No Idea	Yes	No	Have No Idea	Yes	No	Have No Idea
(1) Strengthening instructional leadership	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(2) Promoting school-level planning and problem solving	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(3) Improving instruction	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(4) Ensuring school readiness for all children	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(5) Increasing the academic achievement of all children	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(6) Increasing the academic achievement of educationally deprived children	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(7) Increasing academic achievement in science and mathematics	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(8) Increasing acquisition of basic skills	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(9) Increasing acquisition of higher-order skills	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(10) Continuous assessment of students	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(11) Increasing graduation rates	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(12) Ensuring a safe, disciplined, and drug-free school environment	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(13) Increasing parent involvement	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(14) Other area—Please specify:	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8

23. Which of the following strategies were used to achieve the goals of this effective schools program? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Institution of a new planning process	01
Institution of school-based management	02
Special staff development for administrators	03
Special staff development for teachers	04
Revised teaching methods	05
Revised curriculum	06
Revised methods of student assessment	07
Revised expectations for student achievement	08
Revised expectations for student behavior	09
Other—please specify: _____	10
Don't know	98

24. Which one of the following best describes the position of the person or the name of the group that coordinates this program on a day-to-day basis? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

District Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent	01
Chapter 2 Coordinator	02
Other federal program coordinator (e.g., Chapter 1 Coordinator)	03
Other district administrator	04
Principal	05
Other school administrator	06
Teacher	07
Building-level team	08
Other—please specify: _____	09
Don't know	98

25. In what school year did this effective schools program FIRST begin operating? *(IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE A YEAR, PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR "DON'T KNOW")*

School Year: 19 ___ - 19 ___ [ ] Don't know

26. How long had this program been in the planning stage before it began operating? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

1 to 6 months	1
7 months to 1 year	2
Over 1 year, but less than 2 years	3
2 years or more, but less than 3 years	4
3 years or more	5
Planning is ongoing	6
Don't know	8

27. How important was each of the following reasons for initiating this effective schools program? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH FACTOR)*

	HOW IMPORTANT:					
	Not At All	Some-what	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Have No Idea
(a) Achievement level of students	1	2	3	4	5	8
(b) Needs of disadvantaged students	1	2	3	4	5	8
(c) Quality of instruction	1	2	3	4	5	8
(d) Chapter 1 program requirements	1	2	3	4	5	8
(e) Availability of funds through Chapter 2	1	2	3	4	5	8
(f) Availability of funds through other sources	1	2	3	4	5	8
(g) State mandate	1	2	3	4	5	8
(h) District mandate	1	2	3	4	5	8
(i) Community pressure	1	2	3	4	5	8
(j) Other reason—Please specify:	1	2	3	4	5	8

_____

28. Was there someone who took a leadership role in initiating this effective schools program?

No	0
Yes, at the state level	1
Yes, at the district level	2
Yes, at the school level	3
Yes, at the community level	4
Yes, other—please specify: _____	5
Don't know	8

29. To what extent was each of the following groups involved in planning this effective schools program? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH GROUP)*

	EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING:					
	Not At All	Some-what	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Have No Idea
(a) State education agency Chapter 2 staff	1	2	3	4	5	8
(b) State education agency Chapter 1 staff	1	2	3	4	5	8
(c) Other state education agency staff	1	2	3	4	5	8
(d) District staff	1	2	3	4	5	8
(e) School board members	1	2	3	4	5	8
(f) School administrators	1	2	3	4	5	8
(g) Teachers	1	2	3	4	5	8
(h) Building-level team	1	2	3	4	5	8
(i) Parents	1	2	3	4	5	8
(j) Outside consultants	1	2	3	4	5	8
(k) Community representatives	1	2	3	4	5	8
(l) Other—Please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5	8

30. Has this effective schools program been evaluated, or is it in the process of being evaluated? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes 1
No 2
Don't know 8

} PLEASE SKIP TO SECTION C ON PAGE 13

31. How was the evaluation initiated? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

State mandate for evaluation 1
District mandate for evaluation 2
District initiative 3
School initiative 4
Other—please specify:
_____ 5
Don't know 8

32. Which of the following types of evaluation assistance, if any, has the district provided? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Planning or designing the evaluation	1
Conducting the evaluation	2
Measuring/analyzing program outcomes	3
Reporting	4
Using evaluation data	5
Other—please specify: _____	6
The district has not provided evaluation assistance	0
Don't know	8

33. Which of the following student outcomes, if any, have been measured (or are currently being measured)? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Student achievement as measured by standardized tests	1	
Student achievement as measured by other indicators (e.g., grades)	2	
Dropout rate	3	
Student behaviors (attendance, suspension)	4	
Student attitudes	5	
Other student outcome—please specify: _____	6	
Student outcomes have not been measured	0	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 35
Don't know	8	

34. Have student outcome data been analyzed (or are they currently being analyzed) by the following student characteristics?
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH CHARACTERISTIC)

	Yes	No	Have No Idea
(a) Ethnic background	1	2	8
(b) Gender	1	2	8
(c) Family income (i.e., free/reduced lunch)	1	2	8
(d) Prior achievement	1	2	8
(e) Other characteristic—please specify: _____	1	2	8

35. Which of the following kinds of other outcomes, if any, have been measured (or are currently being measured)? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

Teacher outcomes (e.g., attitudes, leadership)	1
Administrator outcomes (e.g., attitudes, leadership)	2
School-level outcomes (e.g., shared goals)	3
District-level outcomes	4
Parent outcomes (e.g., attitudes, involvement)	5
Other outcome—please specify: _____	6
Other outcomes have not been measured	0
Don't know	8

36. Is a written evaluation report available on this effective schools program? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

If an evaluation report is available, SRI researchers would like to review it as part of this study. All information in the report will be kept confidential. Please send it, along with this questionnaire, to SRI in the postage-paid envelope included in the survey packet.

C. Background Information

37. Approximately what percentage of this district's students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch programs? *(PLEASE ENTER YOUR BEST ESTIMATE. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE A PERCENTAGE, PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR "DON'T KNOW")*

Percentage of students: _____ % [ ] Don't know

38. Approximately what percentage of students in this district are of the following racial groups? *(PLEASE ENTER YOUR BEST ESTIMATE ON EACH LINE)*

(a)	American Indian or Alaskan Native	_____ %
(b)	Asian or Pacific Islander	_____ %
(c)	Hispanic	_____ %
(d)	Black (not of Hispanic origin)	_____ %
(e)	White (not of Hispanic origin)	_____ %
(f)	Other—please specify: _____	_____ %
	Please be sure that lines a to f add to 100%.	100%

39. Which of the following best describes your title? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

District Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent	1
Chapter 2 Coordinator	2
Other federal program coordinator (e.g., Chapter 1 Coordinator)	3
Other district administrator	4
Principal	5
Other school administrator	6
Teacher	7
Other—please specify: _____	8

40. Do you have any comments you would like to make?

Thank you for giving this questionnaire your thoughtful attention.
Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return this completed questionnaire and an evaluation report (if available) to:

Dr. Joan Ruskus
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

OMB # 1810-0556
[Expiration Date 11/30/93]

SEA TELEPHONE SURVEY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, Information Management and Compliance Division, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651; and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project 1810-0556, Washington, D.C. 20503 (Expires 11/30/93).

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SEA TELEPHONE SURVEY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

Interviewer ID: _____

State: _____ ID#: _____

Respondent Name: _____

Title: _____

Office/Division: _____

Phone number: _____

Referred by: _____

DISPOSITION GRID

Date	Disposition	Comments

Disposition Key:

1. No answer/busy/not in
2. Left msg. to return call
3. Callback needed
4. Referred to other
5. Refused
6. Complete

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm calling from SRI International to ask you some questions about your SEA's activities that support effective schools programs. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Is this still a good time to talk?

[If not, reschedule for a better time.]

The interview should take around 45 minutes. You may want to refer to your copy of the questionnaire as we talk.

State: _____

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA's EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS EFFORT

1. First, could you give me a very brief overview of what your SEA does to support effective schools programs?

   COMMENTS:

2. Are the SEA's effective schools activities:

Provided through a single program or office	1	
Provided through a multiple program or office	2	
Don't know	8	} TERMINATE INTERVIEW AND ASK FOR REFERRAL

   COMMENTS:

3. What is the name of this program/office?
[Or, what are the names of these programs/offices?]

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

From now on, I will refer to this program/office *[or these programs/offices]* as the SEA's "effective schools effort."

4. Is the support of effective schools programs the primary purpose of this program/office?
[Or, is the support of effective schools programs the primary purpose of any of these programs/offices?]

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

5. How is the SEA's effective schools effort coordinated?

By one individual	1	
By a state committee	2	PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 8
Through staff meetings	3	
Informally	4	
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	5	
The effective schools effort is not coordinated	0	
Don't know	8	

COMMENTS:

6. What is this individual's title?
Title: _____

7. Where is this individual positioned in the SEA?
Name of office/division: _____
COMMENTS:

8. Did (or will) this effective schools program address any of the following areas during:

   (a) The 1989-90 school year?

   (b) The 1990-91 school year?

   (c) The 1991-92 school year?

   (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH AREA AND EACH SCHOOL YEAR)

	(a) Area Was Addressed in **1989-90**			(b) Area Was Addressed in **1990-91**			(c) Area Will Be Addressed in **1991-92**		
	Yes	No	Have No Idea	Yes	No	Have No Idea	Yes	No	Have No Idea
(a) Strengthening instructional leadership	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(b) Promoting school-level planning and problem solving	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(c) Improving instruction	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(d) Ensuring school readiness for all children	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(e) Increasing the academic achievement of all children	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(f) Increasing the academic achievement of educationally deprived children	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(g) Increasing academic achievement in science and mathematics	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(h) Increasing acquisition of basic skills					1	2	3	4	8
(i) Increasing acquisition of higher-order skills	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(j) Continuous assessment of students	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(k) Increasing graduation rates					1	2	3	4	8
(l) Ensuring a safe, disciplined, and drug-free school environment	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(m) Increasing parent involvement	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8
(n) Other area *[DESCRIBE]*	1	2	8	1	2	8	1	2	8

COMMENTS:

9. What types of support did the SEA provide to local effective schools programs in 1990-91? *[For multiple-program SEAs, give name of program or office providing each type of support.]*

		SEA Program/Office
Staff development (e.g., workshops, institutes)	1	_____
Technical assistance (e.g., program development, evaluation)	2	_____
Provision of funds (e.g., mini-grants, competitive or need-based grants, direct grants)	3	_____
Coordination of local effective schools programs (e.g., networking)	4	_____
Dissemination of information about effective schools	5	_____
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	6	_____
The SEA did not provide support to local effective schools programs in 1990-91	0	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 11
Don't know	8	

COMMENTS:

10. What type of support did the SEA provide ***most often***?

Staff development (e.g., workshops, institutes)	1
Technical assistance (e.g., program development, evaluation)	2
Provision of funds (e.g., mini-grants, competitive or need-based grants, direct grants)	3
Coordination of local effective schools programs (e.g., networking)	4
Dissemination of information about effective schools	5
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	6
Don't know	8

11. Has the SEA granted waivers to schools or districts or assisted schools or districts in obtaining waivers to facilitate effective schools programs?

    Example: Releasing a school from the requirement that a minimum number of hours be spent per week on mathematics so that a new approach to teaching mathematics can be implemented.

    Yes..... 1
    No..... 2 } PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 13
    Don't know..... 8

    COMMENTS:

12. From what type(s) of requirements were waivers granted?

    COMMENTS:

COMPLETE SECTION B ONLY IF STAFF DEVELOPMENT WAS PROVIDED.

B. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

13. You mentioned earlier that the SEA provided staff development for local effective schools programs in 1990-91. In most cases, did the SEA ***offer*** staff development, ***respond*** to requests from districts or schools for staff development, or ***require*** that districts or schools participate?

Offered staff development	1
Responded to requests	2
Required participation	3
Combination of above	4
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	5
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

14. How was the staff development provided?

On site—schools	1
On site—districts	2
Multiple-district workshops	3
State-sponsored conferences	4
Regional service centers	5
Funding for conferences or visits to schools	6
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	7
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

15. Did the district conduct follow-up activities after staff development had been provided?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

16. For whom was staff development provided?

Teachers	1
School administrators	2
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	3
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

17a. Which topics were addressed in the staff development that teachers/administrators received?

17b. What topic was addressed ***most often*** in the staff development that teachers/administrators received?

	Teachers		Administrators	
	(a) Topic Was Addressed	(b) Topic Most Often Addressed	(a) Topic Was Addressed	(b) Topic Most Often Addressed
Background on school improvement or effective schools programs	01	01	01	01
Schoolwide planning	02	02	02	02
Shared decision making	03	03	03	03
Instructional leadership	04	04	04	04
Effective instruction	05	05	05	05
Working with special student populations	06	06	06	06
Parent involvement	07	07	07	07
Alternative forms of assessment	08	08	08	08
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	09	09	09	09
Don't know	98	98	98	98

COMMENTS:

COMPLETE SECTION C ONLY IF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WAS PROVIDED.

C. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

18. You mentioned earlier that the SEA provided technical assistance to local effective schools programs in 1990-91. What types of technical assistance were provided? Remember, we are only interested in technical assistance for the purpose of effective schools programs.

Technical assistance in needs assessment or other program development	1
Technical assistance in carrying out the program	2
Technical assistance in program evaluation or arranging for outside evaluation	3
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	4
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

19. What type of technical assistance did the SEA provide ***most often***?

Technical assistance in needs assessment or other program development	1
Technical assistance in carrying out the program	2
Technical assistance in program evaluation or arranging for outside evaluation	3
Other	4
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

20. How was technical assistance generally provided?

Mailing	01
Phone contact	02
On site—schools	03
On site—districts	04
Multiple-district workshops	05
State-sponsored conferences	06
Regional service centers	07
Funding for conferences or visits to schools	08
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	09
Don't know	98

COMMENTS:

21. Did the SEA provide follow-up assistance after the initial technical assistance had been provided?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

22. For whom was technical assistance provided?

Teachers	1
School administrators	2
District staff	3
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	4
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

COMPLETE QUESTIONS 23 to 27 ONLY IF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN EVALUATION WAS PROVIDED.

23. I'd like to ask a few more questions about the technical assistance in evaluation. What types of evaluation assistance were provided?

Planning or designing the evaluation	1
Conducting an evaluation	2
Measuring/analyzing program outcomes	3
Reporting	4
Using evaluation data	5
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	6
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

24. Is an evaluation required for effective schools programs (e.g., part of grant requirement)?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

25. What types of student outcomes have been measured or are currently being measured?

Student achievement as measured by standardized tests	1	
Student achievement as measured by other indicators (e.g., grades)	2	
Dropout rate	3	
Student behaviors (attendance, suspension)	4	
Student attitudes	5	
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	6	
Student outcomes have not been measured	0	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 27
Don't know	8	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 27

COMMENTS:

26. Have student outcome data been analyzed or are they currently being analyzed by...

	Yes	No	Have No Idea
(a) Racial/ethnic background	1	2	8
(b) Gender	1	2	8
(c) Family income (i.e., free/reduced lunch)	1	2	8
(d) Prior achievement	1	2	8
(e) Other *[DESCRIBE]*	1	2	8

COMMENTS:

27. What other outcomes have been measured or are currently being measured?

Teacher outcomes (e.g., attitudes, leadership)	1
Administrator outcomes (e.g., attitudes, leadership)	2
School-level outcomes (e.g., shared goals)	3
District-level outcomes	4
Parent outcomes (e.g., attitudes, involvement)	5
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	6
Other outcomes have not been measured	0
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

COMPLETE SECTION D ONLY IF FUNDS WERE PROVIDED TO LOCAL EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS.

D. PROVISION OF FUNDS

28. You mentioned that the SEA provided funds to local effective schools programs in 1990-91. Were the funds given to districts, schools, or some other organizations?

Districts	1
Schools	2
Other organizations *[DESCRIBE]*	3
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

29. What criteria did the SEA use in selecting districts/schools for these funds?

Poverty level of students	1
Achievement level of students	2
English proficiency of students	3
Grade level of students	4
Urbanicity of district/school	5
Merits of proposal or grant application	6
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	7
No specific criteria were used	0
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

30. Were any requirements attached to the funds, and if so, what types of requirements?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

31. How many projects were funded in 1990-91?

Number of projects: _____

Don't know 8

32. What was the average level of funding provided per project per year?

Funding per project: _____

Don't know 8

E. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEA EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS EFFORT

The next set of questions refers to the development of the SEA's effective schools effort.

33. First, please give me a brief history of how the effective schools effort got started.
COMMENTS:

34. Would you say that the effective schools effort represented the development of a new effort on the part of the SEA, or was an existing program redirected or modified to address effective schools?

New effort	1
Redirected or modified existing program	2
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	3
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

35. In what school year did the SEA's effective schools effort begin to provide support to local effective schools programs?

School Year: 19__ - 19__

36. How long had the effort been in the planning stage before [*enter implementation year]*?

_____	1	Months
	2	Years
Don't know	8	

COMMENTS:

37. How important was each of the following reasons for initiating the SEA's effective schools effort? Please tell me whether each reason was extremely important, very important, moderately important, somewhat important, or not important at all.

	HOW IMPORTANT:					
	Not At All	Some-what	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Have No Idea
(a) Achievement level of students	1	2	3	4	5	8
(b) Needs of disadvantaged students	1	2	3	4	5	8
(c) Quality of instruction	1	2	3	4	5	8
(d) Chapter 2 requirement for effective schools programs	1	2	3	4	5	8
(e) Chapter 1 program requirements	1	2	3	4	5	8
(f) Availability of funds	1	2	3	4	5	8
(g) State mandate	1	2	3	4	5	8
(h) Community pressure	1	2	3	4	5	8
(i) Other *[DESCRIBE]*	1	2	3	4	5	8

COMMENTS:

38. Was there someone at the SEA, LEA, school, or community level who took a leadership role in initiating the effective schools effort?

No	0
Yes, at the SEA level	1
Yes, at the LEA level	2
Yes, at the school level	3
Yes, at the community level	4
Yes, other *[DESCRIBE]*	5
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

39. What was this person's position (or role if not a staff person)?

_____

40a. Which of the following groups were involved in planning the SEA effective schools effort?

40b. To what extent were these same groups involved in making decisions about the SEA effective schools effort in 1990-1991? Please say whether each was involved a great deal, moderately, minimally, or not at all.

	Involved In Planning			How Involved in Decisions in 1990-91				
	Yes	No	Have No Idea	Not At All	Minimally	Moderately	A Great Deal	Have No Idea
(a) Governor's office	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(b) State legislature	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(c) State Board of Education	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(d) Commissioner's/ Superintendent's office	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(e) Chapter 2 Advisory Committee	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(f) Chapter 1 Committee of Practitioners	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(g) SEA Chapter 2 staff	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(h) SEA Chapter 1 staff	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(i) Other SEA staff	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(j) LEA staff	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(k) School administrators	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(l) Outside consultants	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(m) Community representatives	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8
(n) Other *[DESCRIBE]*	1	2	8	1	2	3	4	8

COMMENTS:

F. STATE CONTEXT FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

The next set of questions concerns the SEA context for effective schools programs and your own perspectives on some issues.

41. How would you describe the general attitude in the SEA regarding the effective schools movement?

    COMMENTS:

42. What do you think the state role should be with respect to promoting effective schools?

    COMMENTS:

43. How is the SEA's effective schools effort coordinated with Chapter 2 effective schools activities?

    COMMENTS:

44. Is there an identifiable leader or constituency that is especially visible in promoting educational reform in general, and effective schools specifically?

    COMMENTS:

45. How has the state's fiscal situation affected educational reforms and the SEA's effective schools effort?

    COMMENTS:

G. FUNDING, STAFFING, AND OUTREACH

This final set of questions concerns funding and staffing of the SEA's effective schools effort and the extent of SEA support to local effective schools programs. All of the questions will refer to the period from July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991.

46. How was the SEA's effective schools effort funded in 1990-91?
(MAY BE MORE THAN ONE SOURCE)

Chapter 2 funds	1
Chapter 1 funds	2
Other federal funds	3
Regular SEA budget	4
Specially earmarked state funds	5
Other *[DESCRIBE]*	6
Don't know	8

COMMENTS:

47. What was the total amount spent for all SEA effective schools activities in 1990-91? Please give your best estimate.

Total funding: $_____

Don't know 8

48. Of this total amount, what ***percentage*** came from state Chapter 2 funds? Please give your best estimate.

Percentage of total funds: _____ %

Don't know 8

49. How many SEA staff were assigned to support the SEA's effective schools effort in 1990-91? Please report in FTEs by job classification to the nearest half.

	FTEs
(a) Professional staff	_____
(b) Support staff (nonclerical)	_____
(c) Clerical staff	_____
(d) Other *[DESCRIBE]*	_____
(e) Don't know	_____

50. How many LEAs and schools received any type of support from the SEA in 1990-91 for effective schools programs?
[PROBE: STAFF DEVELOPMENT, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, FUNDING, ETC.]

(a) Number of LEAs: _____
Don't know..... 8

(b) Number of schools: _____
Don't know..... 8

51. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

That's all the questions I have.
Thank you very much for all of the information you have provided.

OMB # 1810-0556
[Expiration Date 11/30/93]

October 25, 1991

Dear Colleague:

SRI International, under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, is conducting a nationwide study of Chapter 2 and effective schools programs. The study has been mandated by the Congress.

In this questionnaire, we ask for information about the SEA's Chapter 2 program. The questionnaire should be filled out by the person at the state level who is most familiar with the SEA's Chapter 2 program. If that individual is different from the person to whom the survey packet was sent, please forward the packet to him/her and return the enclosed postcard to SRI so that we can conduct follow-up activities with the appropriate individual.

All 50 SEAs as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are included in this survey. Although your participation is voluntary, it is very important to the accuracy of the survey to obtain a high level of response from members of the survey group. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Please complete this questionnaire as soon as possible and return it directly to SRI in the enclosed business-reply envelope. When the study is completed, the Department of Education will provide your state with a summary report of the findings. If you have any questions or comments concerning this study, please telephone Dr. Joan Ruskus at SRI International, (415) 859-5629.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

J. Ruskus

Joan Ruskus
Study of Effective Schools Programs: Their Implementation and Success

SRI International
333 Ravenswood Ave. • Menlo Park, CA 94025 • (415) 326-6200 • TWX 910-373-2046 • Telex 334486 • Facsimile (415) 326-5512

SEA SURVEY OF CHAPTER 2

PLEASE NOTE:

- **In answering questions requiring a dollar amount or a percentage, please provide the most accurate data available. If you are unsure about a figure, give your best *single* estimate. Please write in "0" if your answer means "none." Do not leave any lines blank.**
- **All questions refer to the period from July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991.**

A. SEA CHAPTER 2 FUNDING

1. During the period from July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991, how did the SEA ***spend*** Chapter 2 funds that were reserved for state use (i.e., the 20% state set-aside) among the following ***budget*** categories? Please do not report funds that were allocated but not spent; ***do*** include any funds that were carried over from prior years.
   (PLEASE ENTER 0 IF NO FUNDS WERE SPENT)

SEA Chapter 2 funds spent on ...	Amount spent:
(a) Personnel	$_____
(b) Fringe benefits	$_____
(c) Travel	$_____
(d) Equipment	$_____
(e) Supplies	$_____
(f) Contractual services	$_____
(g) Indirect costs	$_____
(h) Training costs/stipends	$_____
(i) Other—please specify:	
_____	$_____
_____	$_____
(j) TOTAL CHAPTER 2 FUNDS SPENT IN 1990-91:	$_____

2. At the end of the 1990-91 period, how much of the SEA's total Chapter 2 funds were ***unobligated*** (i.e., carried over to 1991-92)? *(PLEASE ENTER 0 IF ALL FUNDS WERE OBLIGATED)*

   Unobligated Chapter 2 funds: $_____

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1-2 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, Information Management and Compliance Division, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651; and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project 1820-0580, Washington, D.C. 20503 (Expires 11/30/93).

3. During the period from July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991, how did the SEA ***spend*** Chapter 2 funds that were reserved for state use among the following ***program*** categories? Please do not report funds that were allocated but not spent; ***do*** include any funds that were carried over from prior years. *(PLEASE ENTER 0 IF NO FUNDS WERE SPENT)*

SEA Chapter 2 funds spent on ...	Amount spent:
(a) Programs to serve students at risk whose education entails higher-than-average cost	$_____
(b) Programs to acquire and use library or other instructional/educational materials	$_____
(c) Innovative programs:	$_____
(1) Schoolwide improvement	$_____
(2) Effective schools programs	$_____
(d) Programs of training and professional development of teachers, librarians, school counselors, other pupil services personnel, administrators, school board members	$_____
(e) Programs to enhance personal excellence and student achievement (e.g., ethics, performing and creative arts, humanities)	$_____
(f) Programs to enhance school climate and educational programs (e.g., gifted and talented programs, technology education)	$_____
(g) Administration of the Chapter 2 program	$_____
(h) Other—please specify:_____	$_____
(i) TOTAL SEA CHAPTER 2 FUNDS SPENT IN 1990-91:	$_____

PLEASE NOTE:

The total amount reported in Question 3, part I, should be the same as the total amount reported in Question 1, part J.

4. To what extent did the SEA ***change*** its use of Chapter 2 funds that were reserved for state use as a result of the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

A great deal	1	
Quite a bit	2	
Some	3	
Not at all	4	} PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 6
Have no idea	8	}

5. Please list the major types of changes that were made in the SEA's use of Chapter 2 funds reserved for state use:

Major changes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. To what extent did each of the following groups influence decisions regarding the use of SEA Chapter 2 funds for technical assistance and direct grants to LEAs for targeted assistance (e.g., for programs to serve students at risk) in 1990-91?
(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH GROUP)

PLEASE NOTE:

These are funds that were not used for Chapter 2 program administration or for the Chapter 2 requirement to support effective schools programs.

	EXTENT OF INFLUENCE OVER THE USE OF FUNDS:				
	None	Minimal	Moderate	A Great Deal	Have No Idea
(a) Governor's office	1	2	3	4	8
(b) State legislature	1	2	3	4	8
(c) State Board of Education	1	2	3	4	8
(d) Commissioner's/Superintendent's office	1	2	3	4	8
(e) Chapter 2 Advisory Committee	1	2	3	4	8
(f) Chapter 1 Committee of Practitioners	1	2	3	4	8
(g) SEA Chapter 2 staff	1	2	3	4	8
(h) SEA Chapter 1 staff	1	2	3	4	8
(i) Other SEA staff	1	2	3	4	8
(j) LEA staff	1	2	3	4	8
(k) School administrators	1	2	3	4	8
(l) Other group—please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	8

B. ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHAPTER 2 PROGRAM

7. During the period from July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991, how did the SEA ***spend*** Chapter 2 funds that were allocated for ***state administration*** of Chapter 2 programs? Please do not report funds that were allocated but not spent; ***do*** include any funds that were carried over from prior years. *(PLEASE ENTER 0 IF NO FUNDS WERE SPENT)*

SEA Chapter 2 funds spent on ...	Amount spent:
(a) Application review and allocation of funds to local education agencies	$_____
(b) Planning and supervision of state funds	$_____
(c) Monitoring and evaluation of programs and activities	$_____
(d) Operations of the Chapter 2 Advisory Committee	$_____
(e) Other—please specify:	
_____	$_____
_____	$_____
(f) TOTAL CHAPTER 2 ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS:	$_____

PLEASE NOTE:

The total amount reported in Question 7, part f, should be the same as the amount reported in Question 3, part g.

8. In 1990-91, how many SEA staff were supported by state Chapter 2 funds for Chapter 2 administration and technical assistance? *(PLEASE REPORT IN FTEs BY JOB CLASSIFICATION TO THE NEAREST HALF)*

	FTEs	
	Chapter 2 Administration	Technical Assistance
(a) Professional staff	_____	_____
(b) Support staff (nonclerical)	_____	_____
(c) Clerical staff	_____	_____
(d) Other	_____	_____

9. In 1990-91, how many SEA staff worked on Chapter 2 administration but were supported partly or entirely by other sources? *(PLEASE REPORT IN FTEs TO THE NEAREST HALF)*

FTEs: _____

10. What is your official job title?

_____

11. What were your major job responsibilities in 1990-91 and what proportion of your time did you spend on each? *(PLEASE WRITE IN YOUR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND ENTER A PERCENTAGE FOR EACH)*

Job Responsibility		**Percent of Time**
Chapter 2 Director/Coordinator	:	_____ %
_____	:	_____ %
_____	:	_____ %
_____	:	_____ %
Total	:	100 %

C. SEA SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

12. Did the SEA receive a waiver for 1990-91 from the federal requirement to use at least 20% of Chapter 2 funds for effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

Yes..... 1

No..... 2

13a. Which of the following types of support did the SEA provide to local effective schools programs in 1990-91 for the purpose of fulfilling the federal Chapter 2 requirement to support effective schools programs? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)*

13b. What type of support did the SEA provide ***most often***? *(PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER)*

PLEASE NOTE:

If the SEA received a waiver from the federal requirement, please indicate which types of support the SEA provided to local effective schools programs in 1990-91, regardless of the federal requirement.

	(a) Support Was Provided	(b) Support Most Often Provided
Staff development (e.g., workshops, institutes)	1	1
Technical assistance in needs assessment or other program development	2	2
Technical assistance in carrying out the effective schools program	3	3
Technical assistance in program evaluation or arranging for outside evaluation	4	4
Provision of funds (e.g., mini-grants, competitive or need-based grants, direct grants)	5	5
Coordination of local effective schools programs (e.g., networking)	6	6
Dissemination of information about effective schools	7	7
Other—please specify: _____	8	8

14. How many LEAs and schools received any type of support from the SEA in 1990-91 for effective schools programs? *(IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE A NUMBER, PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR "DON'T KNOW"*

(a) Number of LEAs: _____ [ ] Don't know

(b) Number of schools: _____ [ ] Don't know

15. In 1990-91, how many LEAs were in the state?

Number of LEAs: _____

16. In 1990-91, how many schools were in the state?

Number of schools: _____

17. Do you have any comments you would like to make?

Thank you for giving this questionnaire your thoughtful attention. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return the completed questionnaire to:

Dr. Joan Ruskus
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

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